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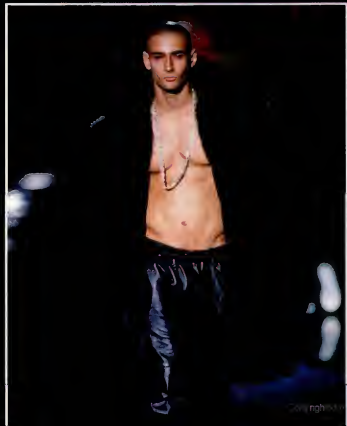
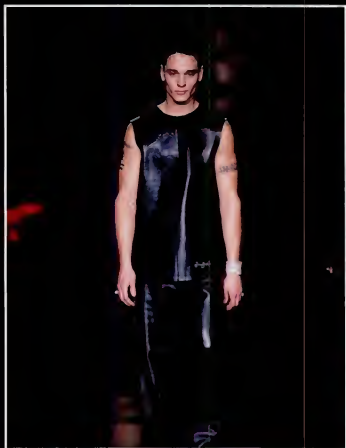
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**ON THE COVER:** **JAY-Z** photographed exclusively for VIBE by Vincent Skeltis; production by Jessica Brown; styling by Monica Morrow-Espino; Entertainment hair by Johnny Castellanos; prop styling by Linda Kell; black leather jacket with logo, black crew-neck cotton logo sweatshirt, white cotton crew-neck T-shirt, and ribbed T-shirt (worn as head wrap), all by Rocawear

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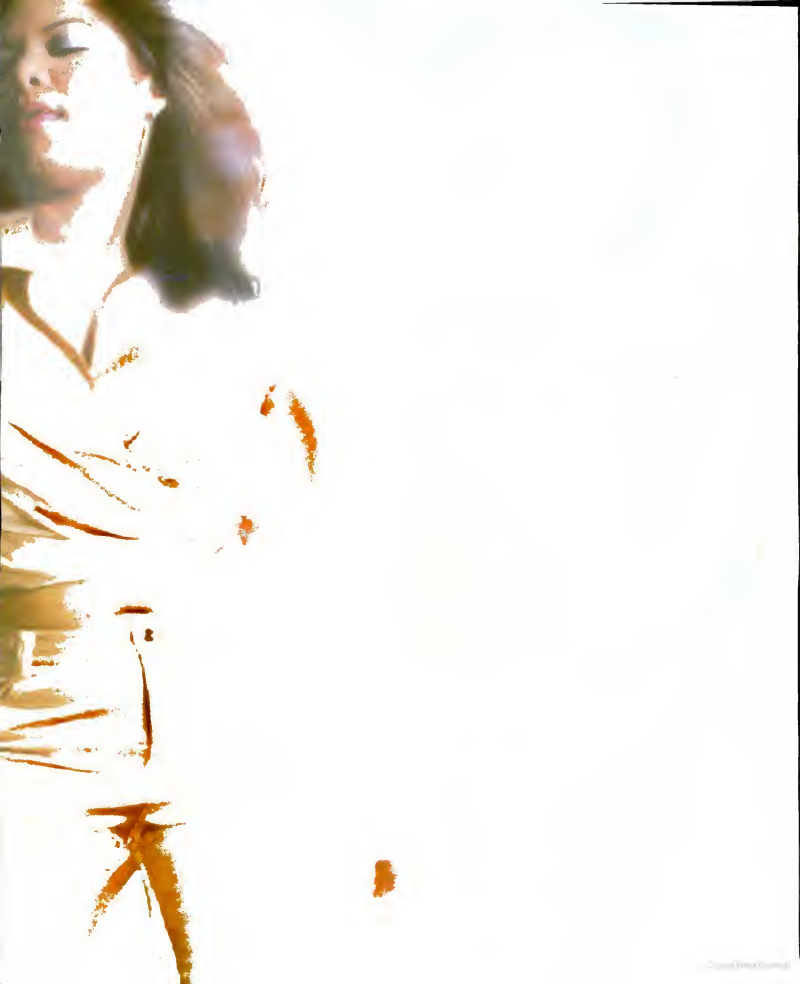
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**CHARITY** photographed exclusively for VIBE by Walter Chin; styling by Emil Wilbekin; makeup by Oniq Weighman/NARS; hair by Dicky at Louis L'arré; prop styling by Dennis Myers/Manik and Associates; casting by Calvin Wilson and Daniel Peñalza/8 Alliance; white and black rabbit's-fur hooded-stretch-print jacket by Co\$TUME NATIONAL, brown silk scarf with beige square pattern by Tom Ford for Gucci, multicolored fur body bag by Fendi



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Five on It. In 1972, life was good.

**Y**ou wake up in a panic. The air is completely still. As you climb out of bed, you feel a chill move across the hallway floor over your sock-clad feet. You move in darkness down the corridor. And finally, like an epiphany, a concert of lights and bling bling is throbbing in your face. A skyscraper of brilliance with a twinkle on top stands before you. Studs? How many carats? Your eyes drop to the floor. Brightly colored boxes, bags, and packages come into focus. IT'S ON!

That's the way I used to feel as a kid on Christmas morning. It was always the biggest day of the year. Everybody was happy during this season. At school, we decorated the classroom. At home, my mother covered every inch of the house with holiday cheer. At church, we prepared for the Sunday school performance of The Nativity—I always hoped I'd be one of the Three Kings and not Joseph (fewer speaking lines and better costumes). There was an abundance of sweet treats—candy, cake, you name it. And Santa,

family, and friends gave homemade gifts. It was like hitting the lottery.

It's that childlike enthusiasm, that *joie de vivre* (that's "joy of living" in French, y'all) I'm feeling in urban music and culture right now. It's in Jay-Z's voice as he works in a Manhattan recording studio ("Jayhova's Witness," page 128). He's talking about his new album, *The Dynasty: Roc la Familia*, produced largely by newcomer Just Blaze, and you can feel the excitement as Jayhova speaks. He's like a kid in a candy shop when he and a bunch of Roc-A-Fella kids are bobbing their heads to these hot new beats.

Jay's not alone. His Dynasty crew—Amil ("One in Amillion," page 138), Beanie Sigel, and Memphis Bleek—are all over his album reeling off rhymes like they're on a school playground. See what I'm saying? It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas.

And that Christmas feeling goes hand-in-hand with keeping in touch with the kid inside. It keeps you feeling young and free. Look at

Shyne ("Ray of Light," page 160). Most of the time he's this quiet kid, smart as a whip, with careful, thoughtful eyes and a big heart. But when he hits the mike, a commanding voice erupts, telling tales of the streets. Then there's Ja Rule ("The Last Temptation," page 146). Acting up in *Turn It Up* and bouncing in the video for "Between Me & You," he's clearly having fun, making feel-good music. Like urban nursery rhymes.

Let's not forget OutKast ("Scentimental Journey," page 140). They're the textbook examples of keeping it real on the inner-child tip. On *Stankonia*, Dre and Big Boi give us the arts and crafts of rap while pushing the music to another level.

And so that you don't play yourself with your kids, our Look section showcases a special Strictly for Our Shorties package. Featuring top-dance kid Cartier Williams ("Homeboy Hooper," page 89) and a new look at the Grinch by fabulous British writer Zadie Smith, author of the bestselling novel *White Teeth* ("The Grinch Who Sold Out," page 90), it'll make you seem clued in even if you're not. We also have a special technology section, Techno-File. It's jam-packed with everything from Mya listening to music blasting from TAG McLaren speakers to Funkmaster Flex booming in the Alpine-loaded Ford Excursion to Def Jam's Kevin Liles typing on his Motorola two-way pager. We also highlight all the other little toys (cell phones, PDAs) that make communication and entertainment more vivid.

Speaking of vivid, I styled "Design o' the Times" with photographer Walter Chin. It's all about bright colors, graphic prints, and crazy pattern combos. We paired Italian creations by Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Versace, Armani, Alessandro Dell'Acqua, Bottega Veneta, Moschino, Iceberg, and Fendi with young models who probably weren't even born when this mix 'n' match trend first appeared in the '70s.

So that's me at age 5 back in '72. The joy I felt when this picture was taken is the way every day should feel now, filled with the innocence of a child on Christmas morning. Happy holidays, everybody. I wish you peace, love, and happiness.

**EMIL WILBEKIN**  
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# Profile

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## THE GUEST LIST



MR. WRITE

**Marc Weingarten**, 36, author of *Station to Station: A History of Rock and Roll on Television*, wrote "Partners in Rhythm" (page 58) and the Limp Bizkit feature, "Hell-Raiser" (page 156). "The first time I met Fred Durst, he talked about becoming the Puffy of rock," says the golf fan. "But don't sell him short. He's working hard to make it happen."

Jamaica-born photographer **Walter Chin** has garnered international fame shooting print ads for fashion faves such as Donna Karan and The Gap and editorial content for magazines including *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *GO*. This month, Chin, 45, shot geometric prints and patterns for "Design o' the Times" (page 176).



A-TO-ZADIE

London lady **Zadie Smith** debuted this spring with her lauded novel *White Teeth*, and she takes a bite out of 'toons in "How the Grinch Sold Out" (page 90). No stranger to holiday green ghouls, her best Christmas gift was a *Ghostbusters* toy. "You caught blob guys with a fake gun," says Smith, 24. "A very good, high-maintenance present."

Photojournalist **Andrew Lichtenstein**, 34, captures the pain of families of victims of police violence in "The Aftermath" (page 166). "People are denied justice because the state commits crimes against them," says Lichtenstein, who has also shot for *Time* and *The Village Voice*. "This story is about an abuse of power in all societies."



SHOOTING SKELTIS



THE MAN

"When I'm not shooting, I'm a wreck," says 24-year-old photographer **Vincent Skeltis**. To let off some steam, this New Jersey native rides his bike and heads to the batting cages. Formerly an assistant to renowned shutterbug David LaChapelle, Skeltis bats 1,000 this month in his debut celebrity shoot of cover man Jay-Z.

## IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

Deputy art director **Brandon Kavulla** lays down design law like no other. His work has won a Silver Medal from the Society of Publication Designers and inclusion in *Print Magazine's* Regional Design Annual 2000. The Ohio native continues his craft, adding his skills to our fly feature spreads, including this month's Jay-Z cover story, "Jayhova's Witness" (page 128). In his downtime, the 28-year-old loves chilling with his wife, Jaqui. "I'm whipped," he says of his boo. "But it's good to be whipped by someone you love."



MEDAL HEAD

FACE: JEFF GARDNER; LIMP BIZKIT: WALTER CHIN; HELLO CHIN: JASON BAKER; PUFFY: PHIL LUOTT; ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN: ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN; VINCENT SKELTIS: BRANDON KAVULLA; LESLIE ANN ZIEGLER: ADELA ZIEGLER



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# VIBE ONLINE

NEWS, NOTES, AND CONVERSATIONS FROM THE URBAN UNDERGROUND—WWW.VIBE.COM KEEPS YOU PLUGGED IN

## Love on the Rocks

On **Friday, November 10**, be among the first to hear **SADE**'s long-awaited new album, *Lovers Rock*, at VIBE Online's exclusive world premiere listening party. The album will be played at **noon EST, 3:00 p.m. EST, and 7:00 p.m. EST**. In the meantime, visit our site for a chance to win a romantic trip for two to a Sade concert in Paris next spring.



Sade

## Visiting Hours

**CHANGING FACES'** third album, *Visit Me*, proves the sultry sirens to be among R&B's most talented duos. Log on and speak with them during our chat on **Monday, November 13 at 9 p.m. EST**.



OutKast

## Future of the Funk

After reading VIBE's feature on **OUTKAST'S ANDRE** and **BIG BOI**, check out our video interview with the "brothers from another mother."



Eve

## The Pit Bull in a Skirt Returns

**EVE** took the world by storm with her double-platinum debut, *Eve—Ruff Ryders' First Lady*, and redefined female lyricism. This month, VIBE Online hosts the world premiere of her forthcoming album. Visit our site this month for more details.



E-40

## Game Recognize Game

As one of the West Coast's pioneering hip hop acts, **E-40** returns to drop a new installment of slangue on *Loyalty & Betrayal*. Log on and check out our feature story and video interview with 40 Fonzearelli.



Jill Scott

## The World Is Yours

With the success of his hit singles "Money Stretch" and "Callin' Me," featuring 112, **LIL' ZANE** is poised to become hip hop's newest heartthrob. Chat with him on **Wednesday, November 15 at 9 p.m. EST**.

## New Jill Swing

Who is **JILL SCOTT**? VIBE Online's chat with the Philadelphia-bred poet and singer on **Thursday, November 30 at 8 p.m. EST** is the place to find out.



**A Word From Our Sponsor** Editor-in-Chief **EMIL WILBEKIN** returns to VIBE Online to chat with readers about urban music, fashion, culture, and politics. Log on **Thursday, November 16 at 8 p.m. EST** for his monthly state of the union address.



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# MAIL

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## THE GREATEST

Your article on LL Cool J ["Doin' It Well," by Lola Ogunnaike, October 2000] was hard as hell. From "Rock the Bells" to "Jack the Ripper," LL has shown everybody that he's the greatest of all time. While there have been Biggie, Tupac, and a few other honorable mentions, no one has had the same success. LL should stand for Lyrical Legend. He has made good movies, TV shows, and love songs. But he's no Will Smith or MC Hammer.

Felony  
Haines City, FL

It must be said that LL Cool J is not the greatest of all time. Being the G.O.A.T. is not based on how long you've been around. LL is a cool artist, but sometimes he comes off as pop rather than rap. Now he's trying to act hard. Livin' up in Hollywood, he forgot where he came from. The G.O.A.T. should never forget his roots. LL forgot about the blacks and Latinos who

buy his shit. He clearly had to take that trip to Rikers to find his way back to hip hop.

Efren Bullard  
Corcoran, CA

Your article on LL Cool J was the bomb. It's about time somebody gave him his props. LL has been around for a long time while many others have come and gone. It's also good to see he has solid acting skills. I wouldn't call him the greatest rapper, but he's one of the best. I predict great things for him. He'll break stereotypes and open doors for black actors in Hollywood.

Curtis McLean  
Mesquite, TX

How do we measure the greatness of an MC? Is it lyrical skill, flow, freestyle ability, impact, influence, and longevity? Is it a catchy hook and production? How about record sales, money, a hot video with lots of honeys in it? If so, LL has the right to consider himself the greatest of all time. That's not to say he's the only one who deserves the title "greatest," but he can't be discounted either. LL embodies the tradition of lyrical quality and energy of the old school. And he adapts whatever is considered hot to his style and liking. Since hip hop was born in the streets, it can be overly critical of artists who show their sensitive side. This is in regard to the cries about LL's ladies' man persona. I too am one of those brothers screaming for more "Rock the Bells" and "I'm Bad" joints. The streets want LL to deliver the rough, rugged, and raw that made him an icon in the first place. With the release of *G.O.A.T.*, we'll see whether "Jack the Ripper" can bring the noise as well as the title home.

Fabian Phillips  
Dallas, TX

Thank you so much for covering James Todd Smith. I grew up on all of his songs and albums. I fell in love with him the moment I heard "I Need Love" and when he made the video for "Around the Way Girl." I believe LL is the G.O.A.T. for several reasons: longevity, being a positive role model, his altruism, and his music. How many rappers can keep crowds rocking after 15 years? Most rap artists can't survive after their first album. I applaud LL for his accomplishments and success.

Mystique-Signal  
New Haven, CT

Your article on LL Cool J was cool. He's an interesting character and an exceptionally energetic performer. For 15 long years, he has been bringing rough but smooth lyrics that keep fans wanting more. I admire the way he carries himself. He's a dedicated father and husband and keeps his business out of the media. After several platinum albums, countless music awards, a TV show, and movies, one can say that LL is bad. But when he says he's the greatest of all time, it's too much. He's one of



YOUR BEST SHOT

Doug Atkins, Philadelphia, PA

**I'VE** **BROKEN**  
**MY TIBIA,**

---

**CRACKED** **A VERTEBRA,**

**DISLOCATED**

**A SHOULDER**

**AND** **SPRAINED** **MY**

(I REQUIRE MORE REGULAR  
MAINTENANCE THAN MY TRUCK.)

**THUMB.**

---

THERE ARE GUYS IN FRANCE NAMED "JEAN CLAUDE" AND "PHILIPPE" WHO SHAVE THEIR LEGS TO CUT WIND RESISTANCE AND ARE SPONSORED BY PEOPLE WHO MAKE WINE. BUT LIKE I SAID, THEY'RE IN FRANCE.



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the greatest, but not *the* greatest.

*William Ross Sr.  
San Bernardino, CA*

Your LL cover was off the hook. Mr. Smith has been rocking the microphone for 15 years, and every lyric is ill. I've been a fan since *Mama Said Knock You Out*. LL gave new meaning to the word "rap." This rapper is unique and sexy at the same time.

*Lauren Thomas  
Far Rockaway, NY*

I've always considered LL Cool J one of the best MCs to grace the

mic. I never thought he was the greatest, though. That honor I would bestow on Biggie. LL is definitely a legend, and he has every right to call himself the greatest. But how he sees fit to act as if he's the final word on that proclamation, I'll never know. Because of his last two albums, *Mr. Smith* and *Phenomenon*, I can't consider him the greatest. It's a known fact that he went for more pop appeal than hip hop. So I considered not buying his latest CD. But because of the high praise it's getting, I've decided to buy it and give Mr. Smith his due chance.

However, he looks really weak challenging the skills of two men who have been dead for more than three years. I understand he's trying to prove a point, but by dissing two slain rappers, it just goes to show that he's insecure about his own skills. Dis Canibus, Ice-T, and Kool Moe Dee. But Biggie and Tupac? That's sad.

*Ian M. Kowalewski  
Ocean City, MD*

Thank you for your article on LL Cool J. It made me realize that the man is a fraud. When he said, "I went there [Rikers Island] to show

the inmates some love," I wonder what kind of love he was showing. His A&R rep initiated the visit to the prison, so he should stop lying to the press, so he should stop lying to me. He never gave a shit about niggas like us, so he should stop writing rhymes that imagine being in our shoes. I eat, breath, and live this shit, and I found what he did insulting.

*Krlyme Child  
Buffalo, NY*

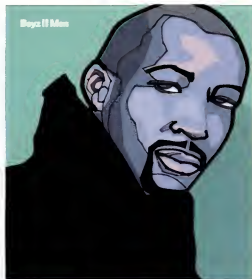
I loved your article on LL Cool J. I think he has earned the right to say he is the G.O.A.T. Fifteen years in the game says a lot to me. He's one of the few rap artists with several platinum albums. How many so-called contenders can say that? The day I saw the microphone on his arm (one of the rawest tattoos I think I've ever seen), I said, only L had the balls to do that and, if you think about it to that end, if you think about it to that end, he's the only one with the right to.

*Ricardo May  
Washington, D.C.*


#### ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL


I was reading your article on Boyz II Men ["Growing Pains," by Lola Ogunnaïke, October 2000], and it was exceptional, as VIBE profiles always are. I was disturbed that the Boyz were so down and discouraged. They have nothing to be bitter or discouraged about. Those guys can still sing and they are one of the most talented acts out there. These new groups can't hold a match to Boyz II Men. These brothers have shown that longevity is key. And for the record, *Evolution* was the bomb. It shows that they've grown musically and creatively. Continue what you're doing guys, I'm still listening.

*LaDonna Brown  
Goldboro, NC*







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# MAIL

## STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA

"The Philadelphia Story" [by Tom Moon, October 2000] couldn't have been written at a better time. Talented artists from New York and California continue to emerge. Even New Orleans has gained notoriety with the help of Master P and the Cash Money Millionaires. Thanks to artists like Will Smith, the Roots, James Poyser, and Beanie Sigel, the City of Brotherly Love is back on the map. They started a hip hop and neo-soul renaissance that caught the attention of fans and producers alike. After reading this story, I found out that the '70s wasn't the only booming period for the city. John Coltrane and other jazz artists represented in the '50s. These movements definitely make Illadelph the spot.

Leon Laing  
Harrisburg, PA

Thanks to Tom Moon for writing the article about Philadelphia. I'm a longtime connoisseur of jazz, classical, and hip hop music. Although I'm "old school," I was enlightened and honored that the history of Philadelphia's music was being acknowledged. I found the article uplifting, inspiring, and encouraging. It's nice to know that after the recent years of obscurity Philly's talent is finally being recognized.

Bernie Perry  
Philadelphia, PA

## RHYME REGULATORS

In response to the Hard Knock News column ["Ill Communication," by Chris Nutter, October 2000], I think people like DMX and Eminem, who have homophobic lyrics in their songs, are nothing but hypocrites. As far as the Eminem-Kurt Loder interview, I've seen it and heard Em's CD. He obviously has a preoccupation with the subject. He spends too much time on that and attacking Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. Last I heard, more kids have their CDs than Slim Shady's. And to be brutally honest, he knows he'd get with either one if they lowered their standards for him. Maybe his gay-bashing lyrics are just to cover up something else.

Shawn Cooper  
Mechanicsburg, PA

I think Judge Muscat needs to get a damn life and quit worrying about other people. Whatever they say shouldn't make a difference to him because he's going to do his bisexual thing anyway. I have to side with Snoop Dogg and DMX. Just because a rapper uses words like

"faggot," "dyke," "gay," or "queer" in his music doesn't mean that he hates them. For example, DMX's song "Get at Me Dog" isn't aimed at homosexuals. It's talking about haters in general. Judge Muscat needs to stop taking bits and pieces of rappers' music and putting in a meaning that isn't even there.

CMR  
Milwaukee, WI

## BEHIND THE SCENES

I haven't had a chance to see the Hard Knock Life tour's *Backstage* movie yet ["Strictly Business," by Gary Dauphin, October 2000], but I'm hoping the film isn't too negative and sheds some light on the rap industry rather than playing up to the stereotypes. Problems with relationships and the law sidetrack many rappers. The cast of the Hard Knock Life tour have all experienced that, and it seems like DMX is self-destructing right now. I'd be satisfied if the film focuses on the music and not the behind-the-scenes drama. It'd be great if they get up close and personal with the MCs. That would help hip hop get the respect it deserves.

Rodney Horton  
Cincinnati, OH

## BROTHERS IN DANCE

Big up to Harry Allen for the nostalgic and inspirational Props piece on the Nicholas Brothers [October 2000]. Imagine my surprise when I flipped to the back of the issue only to find the most impressive, and unfortunately forgotten, performers of our time. The young blacks of my generation are losing a grip on history. It's good to see the writers and editors at VIBE are helping us retain our culture.

Gene-Leigh Wheeler  
Pittsburgh, PA

## CORRECTION

The October 2000 VIBE Confidential column should have stated that L. Londell McMillen is D'Angelo's legal counsel, not his manager.

## WRITE TO VIBE

VIBE encourages mail and photographs from readers. Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 215 Lexington Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10016 (include your daytime phone number). Or send e-mail to [vibe@vibe.com](mailto:vibe@vibe.com). Send photos to VIBE YOUR BEST SHOT (same address). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Photo submissions will become the property of VIBE and will not be returned.

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# start

## PARTNERS IN RHYME

Urban music has gone communal as guest shots become the key to commercial success



Kings and queens of collaboration: (Clockwise from top left) Mos Def, Xzibit, Da Brat, Busta Rhymes, Redman, Eve, and Method Man

**Y**ou hear them everywhere these days—those fugitive voices that pounce without warning, rhyme for a stanza or two, then disappear just as quickly.

They're guest shots, and they've become ubiquitous in hip hop. Time was, a rap artist in an expansive mood would call up some of his MC pals and have them flow over a track just to mix things up. Now, from producer-driven projects such as the current releases from Cypress Hill's DJ Muggs and DJ Clue to compilations like the Ruff Ryders' *Ryde or Die Vol. 2* and "big tent" albums like *Dr. Dre 2001*, guest appearances on hip hop albums are as much about corporate synergy as they are about giving shout-outs.

But the reasons some rappers agree to appear on other artists' albums can vary. According to David Ehrlich, general manager of Priority Records East Coast, they can be broken down into three basic categories, the first being "artists who feel strongly about lending their name to another artist because they want to see them succeed," he says. "The second would be the obvious financial incentive, and the third is self-promotion."

Artists with strong geographical roots, such as Staten Island's Wu-Tang Clan and the cliques from New Orleans's No Limit Records and Cash Money Records, tend to lend their brand names to newcomers who are allied with their respective camps. Master P begot the success of Mia X, Silk the Shocker, and C-Murder; Juvenile opened the door for Lil' Wayne, B.G., and the entire Cash Money Millionaires crew; and the Wu spread their wings with affiliates including Killarmy, Sunz

of Man, and Killah Priest. "There's that culture in hip hop of bringing in your community," says Ehrlich.

Sometimes that collaborative effort can lead to a commercial bonanza. Fellow Brooklynite Memphis Bleek opened up Jay-Z's quadruple-platinum *Vol. 2...Hard Knock Life*, setting the stage for his solo career. Likewise, cameos on key Jay-Z tracks gave the purred rhymes of Amil ("Can I Get A...") and the bark of Philly's Beanie Sigel ("Reservoir Dogs") a chance to shine. This fall, Jay-Z and crew release *The Dynasty-RoC la Familia* to further

**"WHENEVER YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT GUEST STARS," SAYS SENIOR VP OF A&R DEF JAM/DEF SOUL DAVIS, "YOU'RE TRYING TO GO FOR THE NEXT LEVEL."**

drive home their potential for market dominance.

Other times, it's the guest stars themselves who provide the oomph factor. Case in point: De La Soul, a veteran act loved by critics but whose commercial career had been stuck in neutral. Wisely surmising that a little reflected glory would help lure younger listeners, the Long Island trio crammed numerous stars (Busta Rhymes, Redman, Mike D and A&R from the Beastie Boys, etc.) onto its latest album, *Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump*. The album entered the *Billboard* album chart at No. 9. "Redman appeared on the De La Soul album, and it was great for them," says Senior Vice President of A&R DefJam/Def Soul Tina Davis. "Whenever

you're thinking about guest stars, you have to think, 'What target audience don't we touch?' You're trying to go for the next level."

Some artists have practically made doing cameos a side career. Busta Rhymes seemingly lends his gruff flow to anyone who asks. But it's not always Busta's call. Guest requests frequently lead to complex label-to-label negotiations. What's the typical clearance fee, and will the label even get one? What will be the artist's publishing royalty rate? "Artists are signed exclusively to labels," says Davis. "Sometimes you don't want to give up some of your biggest artists for other albums. Now, we won't give up Sisqo for guest shots outside the label, because his album is still selling."

Guest spots don't always come down to economics. For producers like Swizz Beatz, it's about creating a perfect marriage between beat and rhyme. "I listen to the beat and I think, Who would be the best person to flow over this track?" says the Ruff Ryders' sonic architect. "You have to watch the rapper to the beat, or else it don't work." Vacant Lot producer Dame Grease—whose latest release, *Live on Lenox*, features a host of guest MCs, including Nas, Scarface, and Noreaga—likes to keep it in the family. "Most of the artists on my album are based on personal relationships," he says. Regardless of how or why guests appear on rap songs, it's a trend that's here to stay—as long as listeners continue to lap up these cameos like mother's milk. "The audience almost expects a well-known name on an artist's project," says Ehrlich. "It can create a work corporate mentality, though. You've got to be careful how you do it."

Marce Weingarten

## Cipher Sounds

Sharing mike time with fellow MCs has become the norm. Check some of 2003's best and worst cooperative efforts.

**C**ollaborations are the spice of rap life. Classics such as the Juice Crew's "Symphony Vol. 1" (Marley Marl, featuring Big Daddy Kane, Kool G Rap, Craig G, and Masta Ace) and Main Source's "Live at the Barbeque" (featuring Nas, Joe Fatal, and Akiyele) proved long ago that, with the right chefs in the kitchen, group joints can be an aural feast. Now, with so many rappers affiliated with various clans, posses, crews, and cliques, hip hop music is edging closer and closer to being one big posse cut. Here are some of this year's most—and least—memorable collaborations.

### MATCHES MADE IN HEAVEN

- Jay-Z, featuring UGK—"Big Pimpin'"
- De La Soul, featuring Redman—"Ooch"
- Dr. Dre, featuring Hittman, Kurupt, Nate Dogg, and Six-two—"XOplusive"
- Three 6 Mafia, featuring UGK and Project Pat—"Sipin' on Some Syrup"
- Jay-Z, featuring Amil and Beanie Sigel—"Do It Again (Put Ya Hands Up)"



- Snoop Dogg, Scarface, Yung Wun, and Jadedias—"WWIII"
- Beanie Man, featuring Mye—"Girls Dem Sugar"
- Big Pun, featuring Tony Sunshine—"100%"
- Shyne, featuring Barrington Levy—"Bad Boyz"
- Black Rob, featuring Reh Digga, Lil' Cease, G-Dep, De Brat, Beanie Sigel, Puff Daddy, Shyne, Joe Hooker, and The Madd Repper—"Whoa!" (remix)



### MATCHES MADE IN ERROR

- Wyclef Jean, featuring The Rock\* and Melky Sedack—"It Doesn't Matter"
- Amil, featuring Beyoncé of Destiny's Child—"I Got That"
- Black Rob, featuring Lil' Kim end G-Dep—"Espacio"
- Redman and Eminem—"Off the Wall"
- Carl Thomas, featuring LL Cool J—"I Wish" (remix)

- Limp Bizkit, featuring Method Man—"N Together Now"
- Tony Touch, featuring Kafaha and Pam of Total—"I Wonder Why? (He's the Greatest DJ)"
- Goodie Mob, featuring TLC—"What It Ain't (Ghetto Enuff)"
- Q-Tip, featuring Korn—"End of Time"
- Sisqo, featuring Foxy Brown—"Thong Song" (uncensored)



# DROPPIN' DIME

## VIBE'S TOP 10 LIST

**1** **Morris Dees, cofounder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Alabama.** He's the law crusader who won millions of dollars in civil suits against hate groups like the KKK and Aryan Nations. Keep them racists runnin'!

**2** **One Billion Against AIDS (November 19, Sun City, South Africa).** African recording artists team up with Nelson Mandela, Danny Glover, Angela Bassett, and Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson in this benefit concert for AIDS prevention. ▶



**3** **Teitinger Bubbles end Beauty Escape.** This holiday promo flexes Greenhouse Spa treatments for two, complete with a goodie-packed silver travel case and a bottle of champagne (\$1,200, 888-373-2701).

**4** **The Aromacology Patch Company Ltd.** These London-based dietitians are keeping their eyes on the thighs, providing scented skin-patch weapons in the war against snacking.

**5** **California doctors.** Puff, puff, hit, hit, oh, what a relief it is! Cali MDs can now legally discuss and recommend marijuana for medicinal purposes.

**6** **Bobbi Brown Teenage Beauty, by ▶ Bobbi Brown and Annermie Iverson.** Feeling damn unpretty? Then try these self-esteem-boosting beauty tips for teens of all hues, shapes, and sizes.

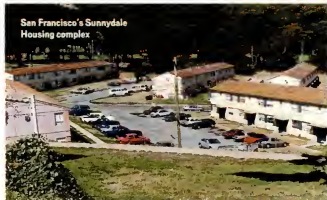


**7** **www.customatix.com.** Get your kicks any way you like 'em at this design-your-own-sneaker-or-shoe site. Colorful styles, suedes, and synthetics galore!

**8** **Holiday bags from Toys in Babeland.** 'Tis the season to be freaky, so ditch the Funky Cold Medina and knock boots with naughty novelties ([www.babeland.com](http://www.babeland.com)). ▶

**9** **Alladdinpower Hand-Powered Generator.** Low cellular-battery life cutting the coos with your boob? Squeeze this charger and get your chat on.

**10** **Side-A Boxers.** Though it's what's on the inside that truly matters, wrap your package in these clever boxer shorts ([www.undergirl.com](http://www.undergirl.com)).



## Studio Apartments

San Francisco housing projects open recording studios

**W**ith the ongoing animosity between independent rap record companies Westmob and Big Block Records—which San Francisco police say resulted in almost 20 shootings and four fatalities between November 1999 and May of this year—it became clear to San Francisco officials that something had to be done to restore peace. So last spring, Mayor Willie Brown met with concerned residents from the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood to brainstorm solutions.

"Some residents suggested the city help construct supervised music studios to provide a positive outlet for youth residing in the projects," says Ron Vinson, the mayor's deputy press secretary. Mayor Brown had a revelation: Perhaps a recording studio could be used to keep young minds focused on more melodious pursuits.

San Francisco Housing Authority Executive Director Ronnie Davis also agreed a music-recording studio on SFHA property might provide youth with a creative alternative to drugs and violence. The SFHA's first step: to sanction efforts to turn a room in the Sunnydale Housing Development in southern San Francisco into a fully functional studio. With that construction under way, housing officials have made plans to open facilities in other developments, including the Bayview Hunters Point section. (The SFHA shut down a home-grown music-recording studio in the Sunnydale complex in April for operating without the city's permission. This is the same room currently undergoing renovation.)

"The studio represents a continued improvement in the quality of my family's life at Sunnydale over the past four years," says one mother who has lived in the development for a decade.

"We are still looking for money to complete the studios, possibly from private foundations, nonprofit groups, HUD, or the mayor's office," says SFHA spokesman Michael Roetzler.

Housing-authority officials envision a profit-sharing arrangement for all proceeds from the recordings, with some of the money going toward youth programs. Says Roetzler, "The proposed studios are a way to encourage musical talent as well as teach the marketing of music."

Ed Goubeaux

To donate resources, contact the San Francisco Housing Authority at 415-554-1250.



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## NATIVE DAUGHTER

**CATHY FREEMAN**, women's 400m dash gold medalist, Sydney Olympics 2000, September 25

**W**ith every swift stride around the track at Sydney's Olympic Stadium, Australia's elegant sprinter Cathy Freeman took giant leaps for all humankind. Streamlined in a hooded tracksuit, the 27-year-old became the first athlete of Aboriginal descent to win an individual Olympic gold medal. This feat is all the more astounding because until the 1960s the Australian government forcibly separated some Aboriginal children from their families for assimilation into white society. Freeman's ancestors are members

of what is known as the "stolen generation." But at the Summer games, Down Under's favorite daughter held no grudges: She lit the Olympic torch during the opening ceremonies. And unfurling the red, yellow, and black of the Aboriginal Peoples' flag knotted with Australia's white stars and Union Jack as she jogged her victory lap, Freeman became a symbol of reconciliation and self-affirmation. A tattoo on her right shoulder reads: 'COS I'M FREE. With her first-place finish, that's never been more true.

Brett Johnson



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Sinéad O'Connor and Cool Bob Love relaxing and relating

**Y**ears before I opened a virtual store at bobbitosfootwork.net, my first retail experience was at an artsy store called Maxilla & Mandible, on Columbus Avenue in Manhattan. We were only allowed to listen to New Age and classical music in the store, and it drove me crazy! With the permission of the owner (my cousin), I played Sinéad O'Connor's first album, *The Lion and the Cobra*, in the store when he wasn't around. I loved dancing to "I Want Your (Hands on Me)," featuring MC Lyta. When the store was empty, I up-rocked to it behind the counter. My cousin walked in and bustad ma! Luckily I was familia, so I didn't get fired. However, after O'Connor's second release, *I Do Not Want This* / *Hoven't Got*, I pretty much lost track of her career.

But the Irish iconoclast was still busy making headlines. She raised the ire of Catholics everywhere when she ripped up the Pope's photograph on *Saturday Night Live* in 1992. Recently, O'Connor sub-

verted papal politics again by being ordained a priest by the Latin Tridentine Church, a sect not recognized by the Vatican. I was happy to meet her to see where her hard is with the release of her latest batch of sensitive songs, *Foith and Courage*—even though she dished my portable record player.

**Nina Simone—"Four Women" (1962)**

**S.O.:** Why didn't they give you a better record player?

**B:** Whaddaya mean? That's mine! It's an old-school portable. I got it in Japan.

**S.O.:** That's bad. It looks like a kiddie's. This song is by Nina Simone.

**B:** The voice is unmistakable. Heavy shit for a song that probably was recorded in the early '60s.

**S.O.:** She's just fucking amazing. I recently presented her with the Hot Press Lifetime Achievement in Music Award in Dublin. I went down to the side of the stage to say hello. She gave me a hug, and it made me want

to cry. She had the most incredible feeling and energy. I'd never felt anything like that in my life. Something went straight from her heart straight into mine.

**B:** When I listen to her records, I feel like I'm seeing her live end I'm in the first row. That's how real she is.

**S.O.:** She doesn't even need to say anything and you feel her. She's huge in Ireland.

**B:** I heard she lives in Europe now. She's always been well received there.

**S.O.:** She gives great eyeliner, and I love eyeliner.

**B:** You mean makeup?

**S.O.:** Yeah. She does proper big eyeliner, blue and long; she knows how to wear it. That's why everyone loves her.

**Vinia Mojica, featuring Last Emperor—"Evolution" (1999)**

**S.O.:** That's really good. Too bad that guy rhyming at the end wasn't in it more.

**B:** Last Emp is a really talented MC out of Philly.

**S.O.:** Who's the singer?

**B:** Vinia Mojica. She's done a ton of guest spots, including De La Soul's "A Roller Skating Jerm Named Saturdays." It's too bad she doesn't have a solo LP.

**S.O.:** This looks like an interesting album.

**B:** *No More Prisons* is a project that's trying to raise awareness about the prison situation in the U.S. We have the largest prison population of any country in the world.

**S.O.:** Well, I guess you've got more people than any other country.

**B:** Yeah, but I think it's per capita as well.

**Nora Dean & Duke Reid—"Ay Ay Ay" (1993)**

**S.O.:** Time to light the spill up! What the fuck was she smoking? I want some.

**B:** Ha ha ha! I just realized she's making those bird noises. The whole time I had this record I always thought they had recorded birds chirping in the studio.

**S.O.:** I love Jamaican music. I like Buju Benton and Sizzla. I'm strictly roots.

**B:** You're confusing me because I wouldn't consider Buju or Sizzla roots artists, more dancahall.

**S.O.:** They are now. Their last two albums had each been pretty Rasta. They've transformed.

**B:** In your album credits you bigged up all Rastafarians worldwide. Have you been to Jamaica?

**S.O.:** I haven't, but I lived in London for 13 years, and Jamaica definitely lives in London. On my new album, I mixed up a little of the Rasta roots thing with traditional Irish sounds.





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# BOMBING ATOMICALLY

New York City's legal graffiti gallery



Wild-style warehouse:  
The walls of Phun  
Phactory



For New York graffiti writer Mezmerized, the thrill of spray painting public structures can't compare to the satisfaction of spending up to eight hours a day creating intricate artwork in a legally sanctioned space.

Like many other graf masters, the 22-year-old Carnegie Mellon University grad has given up outlaw tagging for the safety of The Phun Phactory Aerosol Art Corp., a 4-million-square-foot

Queens, N.Y., warehouse converted into a studio for aerosol artists. "There are still hardcore writers who do it illegally," Mezmerized says. "But this has taken a lot of people off the streets and given them a chance to promote legal art."

The immense space opened in 1993 after Pat Di Lillo, 43, a plumber and member of Graffiti Terminators (a neighborhood vandalism-abatement program) saw an ironic beauty in the graffiti

he was removing from walls in Queens. Inspired, Di Lillo, with the aid of graf king Iz the Wiz, established the nonprofit organization. His hope is to support talented youth in expressing their art without harassment from police and local business owners.

Now, prolific writers and aspiring new jacks worldwide come to paint at the Phactory. To be one of the nearly 1,000 writers who "piece" in the gallery each year, artists must present their portfolio to Di Lillo—who carries the honorary tag of Tap 45.

Keeping the Phactory running is no easy task. Fortunately, corporate heavyweights such as Citibank, Coca-Cola, and Time Warner donate funds, and Di Lillo volunteers an average of 15 hours a day.

Local politicians praise Di Lillo's efforts and agree that graffiti art can add much needed splashes of color to the 'hood. "The Phun Phactory is giving kids an alternative to express their type of art," says New York City Council member Walter L. McCaffrey. But McCaffrey also says there are some law-enforcement agents who remain convinced that encouraging graffiti will lead to criminal activity. "Some police authorities, not just NYPD, think they will find kids vandalizing public property," he says. "But they never do. They'll just have to get over it. This is a place that gives kids creative freedom but in a disciplined environment." *Dee Te*

For more information, go to [www.phunphactory.org](http://www.phunphactory.org).

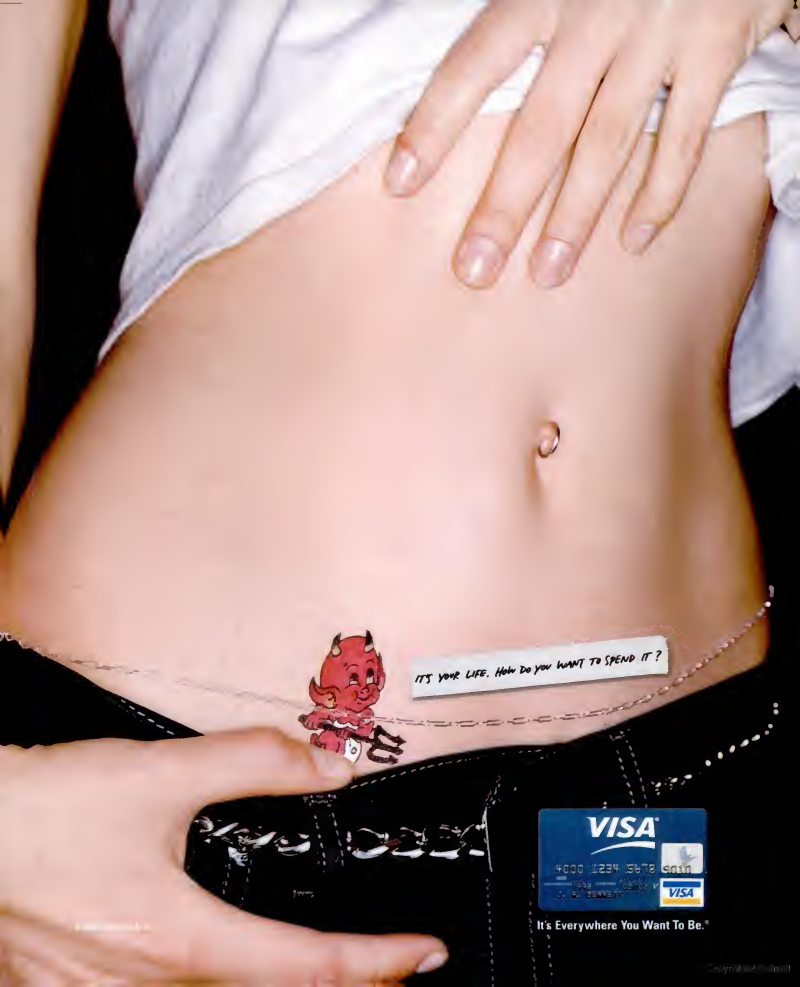
## VIBE CONFIDENTIAL THE LOWDOWN ON THE DOWN LOW

Dear readers, 'tis the season to be jolly. VC has been movin' and groovin'. It's been party central for me: MTV's *Video Music Awards*, Hot 97's Player's Ball, the New York Gucci store opening, and Aretha Franklin blowing out the Louis Vuitton bash. Busy, busy, busy! VC recently went to a very intimate dinner party for **Andre Harrell's** 40th birthday hosted by **Russell Simmons** and **Naomi Campbell**—who was stuck on a plane returning from the NASCAR races in Indianapolis. *Fabulous!* The Italian restaurant Barolo in New York City's tony SoHo was packed: **LL Cool J**, DJ **Mark Ronson**, DefJam's **Lyor Cohen**, **Stephon Marbury** of the New Jersey Nets, video director **Little X**, **Faith Evans**, model/writer **Veronica Webb**, and **Kimora Lee Simmons**. All the festivities got me thinking about Christmas. So, very on-the-scene reporting, I quizzed everybody about what they *wanted* for Christmas. Roc-A-Fella's **Damon Dash** wants health, prosperity, and a slumber party at a supermodel's house—I guess he wants the same things he had this year. VIBE Contributing Style Editor **Kidada Jones** wants a

Versace fur and health. Sexy Tommy Hilfgriff model **Joy Bryant** wants a BMW jeep. Sean John Executive VP **Jeffrey Tweedy** wants a successful 2001. Agent/manager **Bethann Hardison** wants a two-day stay at a spa. **Doug E.** Fresh wants more unity among rappers and people of all colors. **Donald Trump** wants health, happiness, and love for him and his family. Publicist/consultant **Marvet Britto** wants all races to coexist peacefully. J Music's **Ron Gillyard** wants to go on a vacation where the water is blue, the sand is white, and palm trees are abundant. *The View's* **Star Jones** wants the New York Knicks to win a championship. Simmons wants his 7/2-month-old daughter, Ming, to be walking by Christmas. Finally, birthday boy Mr. Harrell wants a black-and-white photo album of his 5-year-old son, Gianni, from the time he was born till now. That's what the big willie's want for Christmas. I guess I need to go home and start making my own wish list. I wish, I wish, I wish... Oh yeah, don't forget, this is all off the record, strictly on the QT, and you didn't hear it from me.



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## MANY STYLES

1. Doesn't model **DEVON AOKI** remind you that human perfection truly exists? 2. Talk about genetic engineering. **KIMORA LEE SIMMONS** and daughter Ming cast a radiant glow in summer whites at the Daddy's House carnival fund-raiser in East Hampton, N.Y. 3. Could **JAY-Z** be taking a cue from elebaster-skin-loving pro sports stars by letting R&B singer **PINK** taste the chocolate? 4. Looks like **CHRISTINA AGUILERA** found one way to distinguish herself from the other teen pop divas by adding some red and black highlights to her locks. 5. Though still facing his final day in court, **SHYNE** finds time to party with friend **FAITH EVANS** at Club Shine in New York City. 6. Looking like a sky-blue Powerpuff Girl, **LISA "LEFT EYE" LOPEZ** once again pushes the style envelope in Philadelphia at the birthday bash of her boyfriend, model **SEAN NEWMAN**. 7. **BRITNEY SPEARS** and **ANANDA LEWIS** have a few things in common: perfect smiles, lifeless hairdos, trendy shades, and MTV's endorsement. 8. No matter what people say, **LIL' KIM** has it going on with Auburn-colored tresses and designer gear you know she ain't pay for. 9. Monkeying around, Limp Bizkit's **FRED DURST** does his best Mr. Spock impression. 10. Flaunting her new floppy 'do, **TONI BRAXTON** tosses a seductive glance even when she's pouting. Who'd be man enough to leave her? 11. Despite having a proper British accent, heavyweight champion **LENNOX LEWIS** speaks most eloquently with his hands. 12. "Recording artists who spend mad loot on bling-bling jewels on the next **JENNY JONES** show!" New Orleans's No. 1 stunner, the **HOT BOYZ**, visit the popular talk-show host. **Brett Johnson**



1, 6, 8, 9, 10 CAROLINE TORENA/CHAS; 11, 4, 7) WALKER DODD/SHIRN; 13) AJAJANI





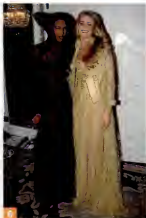
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## SHOOTING STARS

"If Patrick doesn't take your picture, you're over. If he doesn't even say hello, you don't exist," says dish expert Michael Musto. You know you've arrived when society photographer PATRICK McMULLAN clicks the shutter end you're in his frame. McMullan displays his flicks this month during his first major studio exhibition at the Tony Shafrazi gallery in New York City. Two of McMullan's books will be published in conjunction with the show: *Men's Show* chronicles the male fashion world, and *Secrets of the Riviera* captures Victoria's Secret models who strutted down the catwalk during this year's lingerie show at the Cannes Film Festival. Here's just a sample of his eyes for the chic set. 1. Pretty in pink. TYRA BANKS does the black Barbie thang. 2. JANICE COMBS and LIL' KIM in full-length furs, Baby Phet lingerie, and flaxen manes. 3. Ferce even in rollers and a sky-blue robe, supermodel GISELE BÜNDCHEN never looks damn unpretty. 4. FOXY BROWN and actress MILLA JOVOVICH strike a pose. 5. SAMUEL L. JACKSON fills out a Hugo Boss leather ensemble in true Shaft style. 6. NAOMI CAMPBELL and CLAUDIA SCHIFFER rock the haute gothic look in black and gold gowns. 7. TOMMY (left) and ANDY HILFIGER bookend Sean John founder and rap mogul SEAN "PUFFY" COMBS. 8. Supermodel STEPHANIE SEYMOUR mingles with rap impresario RUSSELL SIMMONS and master lensman HERB RITTS. 9. TYSON BECKFORD end fashion designer ANAND JON flexing in friendship. 10. Model/actress ELIZABETH HURLEY and rocket man ELTON JOHN in rhinestone shades. 11. Model SCOTT BARNHILL raps the rugged in camouflage with R&B swoon doctor LUTHER VANDROSS. 12. Does model WILL LEMAY pump 300 backpack lifts per day to get those abs? 13. Will the real slim sexy please stand up? DONATELLA VERSACE and JENNIFER LOPEZ look fabulous as usual.

B.J.





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## HARD KNOCK NEWS

## Award Tour

Unexpected outbursts add an element of surprise to televised awards shows

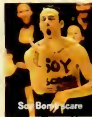
Viewers of entertainment-industry awards shows are now tuning in as much to see what debacle ensues as who will win top honors. Though some artists might scoff at any shadows cast over their limelight, several recent interruptions at the once stodgy star-studded galas have made for some damn good television.



Rage Against the Machine bass player Tim Commerford, upset that Limp Bizkit won Best Rock Video at this year's *MTV Video Music Awards* held at Radio City Music Hall, scaled a stage prop in protest. He was arrested and later pleaded guilty to resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. In addition, five men were arrested for sexually abusing women who were outside the auditorium hoping to catch a glimpse of their favorite celebrities. "People are going to do what they're going to do," said one NYPD officer. "The police can't get in their heads and figure them out." Spokespeople for Rage, MTV, and Radio City Music Hall declined comment.

Also this year, fights involving rappers such as DJ Quik, Mobb Deep, E-40, and Bone-Thugs-N-Harmony marred the second annual *The Source Hip-Hop Music Awards*. "Although it is up to *The Source* to provide effective security," said *Source* president and founder David Mays of the August 22 incident in the *New York Daily News*, "... it is up to the artists to act responsibly." On the same day, at the *Kerrang! Awards* in London, alt-metal band Slipknot destroyed the stage of the Hammersmith Palais after accepting several awards. Presenter/actress Britt Ekland was hospitalized after she twisted her ankle on a watermelon slice left over from a previous food fight.

But these mishaps are nothing new. Who can forget Ol' Dirty Bastard storming the stage shouting "Wu-Tang is for the children!" as Shawn Colvin accepted her Grammy for 1997's *Song of the Year*? Or when a man with *SOY BOMB* scrawled across his chest jumped onstage while Bob Dylan performed "Love Sick"? "I didn't think the Grammys would be so crazy," *Boyz II Men*'s Shawn Stockman said to the Associated Press backstage. Looks like awards-show mayhem doesn't discriminate. *David Crowley*



## 20 QUESTIONS



(From left) Patrick Ewing, Geena Davis, Guru

1. Didn't **Britney Spears** and **Christina Aguilera** look like dancers for the teen version of *Showgirls* at this year's *MTV Video Music Awards*? 2. Wouldn't the **Summer Olympics** have been more exciting if athletes used hip hop as their performance music? 3. Won't you be happy when *Survivor* **Richard Hatch**'s 15 minutes of fame are up? 4. Can we give all the rhinestone-studded clothes a rest? 5. Hasn't **Sisqo**'s "Thong Song" officially become this year's "Livin' la Vida Loca" and "Macarena" combined? 6. Now that there are so many black millionaire music moguls, isn't it about time more of them started record-distribution companies so they can really own this music? 7. Seeing how Jay-Z and DMX parlayed the Hard Knock Life tour into more money with *Backstage*, isn't **Master P** regretting that he never toured? 8. Will Puffy respond to **Madonna**'s dis in that fly "Music" video? 9. Though **OutKast** kick conscious lyrics, don't we still love how they maintain their Southernplayalistic side with the bootylicious girls in their video for "B.O.B."? 10. Now that **Patrick Ewing** is no longer a New York Knick, aren't we really afraid of the Miami Heat? 11. Doesn't **Jordan**, the hot Brazilian stripper from HBO's *G-String Divas*, have some ultra-erotic dance moves? 12. After watching UPN's benevolent **Girlfriends**, the black-girl version of HBO's *Sex and the City*, don't you wonder whether TV land will ever capture the complexities of black people? 13. By the way, when will HBO give us a full-length *Sex and the City* movie? 14. Aren't we glad to see newsman **Ed Gordon** back on BET? 15. But isn't BET's New York-based show *106 and Park* absolutely terrible? 16. What is **Will Smith** doing playing **Matt Damon**'s caddy in his new flick, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*? 17. Since every male rapper has a clothing line, which female MC will take some initiative and become the first lady of baggy gear? 18. With their strip-joint banger "Tongue Ring," don't **Three 6 Mafia** tear the club up once again? 19. Why are the women just singing end only men rhyming on **Guru**'s third *Jazzmatazz* installment? 20. Now that every female celebrity wants to get naked for awards shows (**Geena Davis** end **Halle Berry** at the Emmys) ever since **Jennifer Lopez** sported that sheer Versace get-up to the Grammys, will men soon get into the ect?

## SLANGUISTICS

**ONE** (won't interj., n.): a farewell, like "peace." Before commercial breaks, *New York's* Hot 97 radio jock Funkmaster Flex often parts with variations: "Four minus

three." May derive from Bob Marley's peace-and-unity-promoting hit "One Love." Often used to imply "stay strong," as Nas rhymed on "One Love."



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# BOY WONDERS

Some unlikely music moguls invest in the boy-band craze

**E**minem and Kid Rock dis them. Millions of pubescent girls want to kiss them. They're boy bands, and they're more popular than ever. The Backstreet Boys' second album, *Millennium*, is a 12-times platinum phenomenon, and 'N Sync's latest CD, *No Strings Attached*, sold more than 2 million copies in its first week of release. With such profits to be made, a handful of successful pop iconcum-label execs have taken a cue from candy-coated confection architects like Maurice Starr (New Edition, New Kids on the Block) and Louis J. Pearlman ('N Sync, Backstreet Boys). As the current reigning stars are already aging, these star makers have harvested a new crop of bands they hope will inherit the teen-idol mantle. Let's see what Master P (who's actually partnered with Starr), R. Kelly, Madonna, Timbaland, and VIBE founder Quincy Jones have in mind for the future of bubblegum pop.



**Svengali:** Timbaland

**Boy band:** Outsiderz 4 Life

**Gimmick:** Hardcore lyrics make them the pop-group version of Eminem.

**Secret weapon:** A predictable R&B sound courtesy of electro-beat maestro Timbaland.

**Most likely to...** succeed as a short-shelf life R&B act rather than a dispensable pop outfit.



**Svengali:** Quincy Jones

**Boy band:** Youth Asylum

**Gimmick:** Multiethnic pretty boys who

combine hip hop with pop.

**Secret weapons:** Genuine talent and Q's stamp of approval.

**Most likely to...** blow up on MTV's *Total Request Live*.



**Svengali:** Madonna

**Boy band:** No Authority

**Gimmick:** Four-part harmonies and model good looks.

**Secret weapons:** Eyeliner, lip gloss, and dye jobs.

**Most likely to...** get lost in the sauce.



**Svengali:** Master P

**Boy band:** 6 Piece

**Gimmick:** Clean-cut crooners who are getting a black rap label.

**Secret weapon:** The No Limit tank  
**Most likely to...** star in a semiautobiographical straight-to-video flick.



**Svengali:** R. Kelly

**Boy band:** Secret Weapon

**Gimmick:** Pick up where Boyz II Men left off before they fell off.

**Secret weapon:** Family ties (three members are brothers).

**Most likely to...** follow in the footsteps of the men who call themselves the Backstreet Boys.

Margeaux Watson

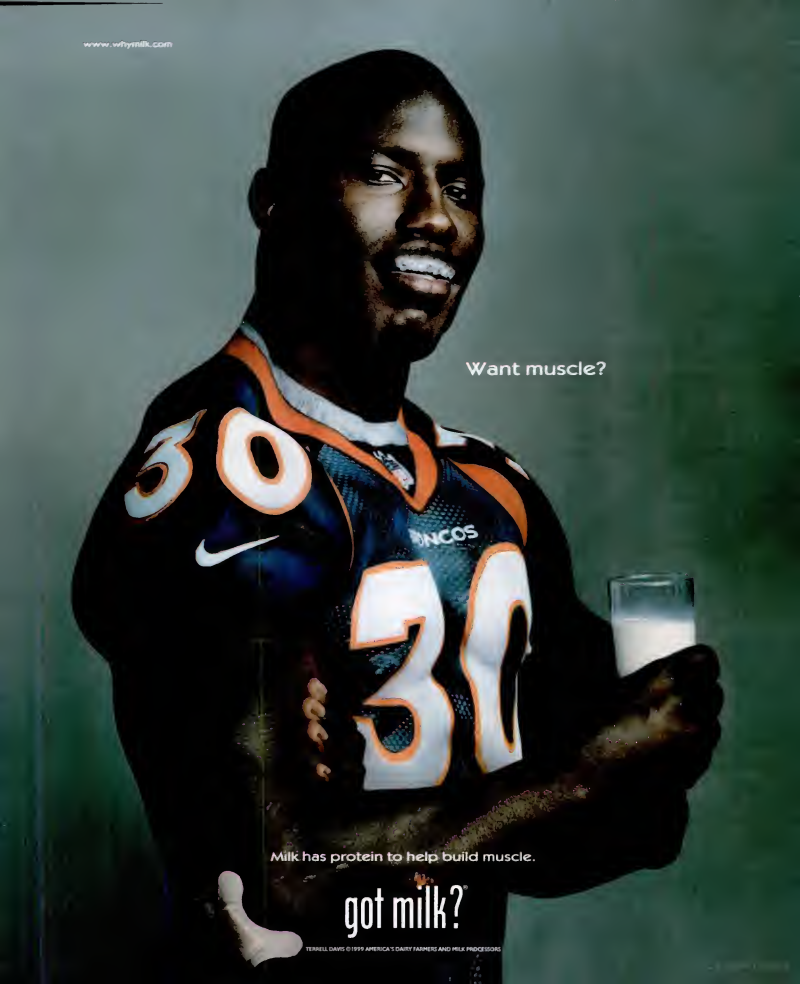


## SEA NYMPHS

Three divas stay afloat a water-world fantasia

**L** if Kim, Toni Braxton, and Trina all seem to have a mermaid complex. Each of these sexy, swimsuit-clad sirens can be found floating in a shimmering body of water, hair whips flailing like brown and gold shocks of divine algae sent from the exotic depths of Atlantis. For the June/July 2000 issue of VIBE, David LaChapelle snapped a wet-and-wild Kim. But what seemed like a cool metaphor for hypnotic feminine allure became a visual cliché in a matter of months. Perhaps buoyed by her voluptuousness, Trina wades in a silver-lined pool in the clip for her club anthem "Pull Over." Toni B. copped a similar pose, arms undulating to languishing Latin rhythms in the video for "Spanish Guitar." Perhaps it's a chicken-egg argument, but maybe next time the video gads won't be so blatantly obvious in their similar aquatic points of reference. **B.J.**



A Black man with a very muscular physique is the central figure. He is wearing a dark blue Denver Broncos jersey with orange and white accents. The number '30' is prominently displayed on his chest and shoulders. A white Nike swoosh is visible on the left side of his chest. The word 'BRONCOS' is partially visible on the front of the jersey. He is smiling and looking slightly to the right. In his left hand, he holds a clear glass filled with white milk. The background is a dark, textured green.

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# SHERM'S SHTICK

SHERMAN HEMSLEY as told to Cori M. Murray

*When George and Louise "Weezy" Jefferson moved on up to that de-luxe apartment in the sky on the '70s sitcom The Jeffersons, it signaled the arrival of an aspiring black middle class on prime-time television. Sherman Hemsley, 62, added that well-known peacock strut to his portrayal of the hot-tempered dry cleaner; with his brotherman style, George defiantly thumbed his nose at the white man's world. Predating programs such as The Hughleys, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, Martin (all of which Hemsley would eventually guest-star on), and The Cosby Show, The Jeffersons helped inject laughter into the race-and-class conundrum of upwardly mobile African-Americans.*

*But don't let those Old Navy commercials fool you. The Philadelphia native, who also starred as Deacon Ernest Frye on the sitcom Amen in the '80s, has been keeping busy. The stage-trained actor takes his craft seriously. He keeps his celebrity flame burning, headlining a musical-comedy variety show in Las Vegas and often hosting at comedy clubs and casinos across the country. Looks like he's not letting go of his piece of the pie anytime soon.*

**M**y stage background was musical comedy. My big thing in New York City was being on Broadway in the play *Parfite*. Theater is the foundation of everything. It all started onstage, so that's where you get all your knowledge. If you can do theater you can do anything. Every night you get a chance to perfect the character.

The way I do my characters is sort of like putting a puzzle together—past experiences, people I know, sort of like that. When you're in character, you have to stay within the frame of the character. You can't just draw on anything that's not true to the character. You have to make the character flow. Make him live. Give him as many characteristics and narratives as you can think of. Also, rhythm is very important. To be out of character for George Jefferson would be talking slowly. Like, for instance, in a melody or a song, you have to stay within that beat. If you go outside the beat then you're off rhythm. It's the same thing with acting. There's a rhythm in my head that I hear... everything is done to that rhythm.

I would never slam doors in people's faces, but that was [George Jefferson's] character. I had to be true to the character, so I had to do it as George would. If I hold back then there's

something lacking in his personality. It's like an alter ego. And it was a fun character to play when you're expressing these things to people.

I was fortunate enough to learn from Lloyd Richards in New York. He was dean of Yale's Drama School. Later, he was my teacher at the Negro Ensemble Company. Mary Alice was in my class. A whole bunch of others—Richard Roundtree, Phylicia Rashad—were part of the company. [Richards] said he couldn't teach us how to act but could teach us his method, and we had to learn our own method from that.

I just did the movie *Color of a Dream* with Bizzy Bone from Bone Thugs-N-Harmony. He's just a sweetheart of a guy. It's about four kids who grew up together and they all go on their different paths. There's tragedy and comedy throughout. I play the police sergeant, and Bizzy is one of the kids. He's bad and becomes a gangster. I'm trying to tell him to be cool, and he always says, "Why you always messing with me?" We all love him, but he's the one who turns out the worst.

You've got to stick your dreams no matter what people say. If something inside of you is guiding you to do certain things and you feel you have this gift, do it—otherwise it's gonna haunt you for the rest of your life. Even if you fail, it's best to try it and give it a shot. And the main ingredient is love. God is love, love is all, and all is one. Just think about it and you'll see. That which motivates everything is love [laughs]. It might not be pretty sometimes, but you have to mix the bitter with the sweet [laughs]. And you can quote me on that one. □



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BY Mennen

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Can a new book, *Losing the Race*, that contends blacks are biased against intellectual pursuits have all the answers?

**F**or neoconservatives like John H. McWhorter, African-American author and University of California, Berkeley associate professor of linguistics, the cause of his perceived academic failures among young blacks is simple: They are in eternal rebellion against white values and standards; they while away endless hours cursing out the white man for their problems; and they break out in cold shakes at the prospect of being tagged a nerd by their homies for working hard in school.

McWhorter, an unabashed racial self-flagellator, knows the drill well. In his book *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*, he spews a litany of homilies, anecdotes, unsupported statements, and flawed studies, topped off with a recycling of the assertions of veteran black critics Shelby Steele, Ward Connerly, and Thomas Sowell. McWhorter spices up his book with

a few hip phrases he has coined, such as the "Cult of Victimology," "Cult of Separatism," and "Cult of Anti-intellectualism," to support his views. In his wrap-up chapter, "How Can We Save the African-American Race?" McWhorter calls for "the demise of affirmative action" if blacks are to have any hope of digging out of their morass.

If anyone is so easily led as to adopt McWhorter's argument, some black personalities in the hip hop community may be viewed as unwitting accomplices. In their manner and through their art, many rappers appear to further the stereotypical images he insists are keeping many blacks from realizing their potential. Music videos that boast skewed images of wealth, easy women, and the thug life over social responsibility and intellectual pursuits could very well become easy targets.

In fact, he singles out Tupac Shakur as having adopted the "Victimologist 'gangsta' attitude in both art and life." He writes: "But for Shakur, growing up receiving formal training in performance in fine schools, 'gangsta' was a choice, not a destiny." McWhorter contends that after Shakur's violent death, the black community rallied around the rapper as a victim of an unfair system, thus glorifying his thuggish and run-ins with the law as a cool strike against the establishment. McWhorter claims this type of self-victimization is limiting.

By contrast, he fails to mention artists like Lauryn Hill, Common, Mos Def, dead prez, and rap's elder statesmen KRS-One and Chuck D, who have long supported the concept of being "cool" intellectuals—socially conscious and politically informed, if not active. Sure, other rappers may promote gangsterism and even materialism (jewelry, expensive cars) instead of intellectual pursuits. For them, perhaps the *smart* thing to do is improve their financial situation and ensure the happiest life they can provide for themselves.

McWhorter's sweeping generalizations—some might say put-downs—fly in the face of sobering facts that should make him and others who believe that blacks are chronic academic boos take note. Since 1990, at least 22 African-Americans have won Rhodes scholarships and thousands of African-American high schoolers have participated in the NAACP's Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). Moreover, in a comprehensive report released in February 1999, the Census Bureau painted this picture of black educational progress in 1998:

- For those aged 25–29, nearly nine out of 10 are high school graduates and 15 percent have college degrees.
- College enrollment has soared over 40 percent from a decade ago.

These statistics contradict McWhorter's assertions that most young blacks are disinterested in academic pursuits. Many blacks do score high on SAT tests and are admitted to colleges, and many excel in the classroom. But let's say for a minute that he's right, and some blacks are substandard students. My questions for him are: 1. As an educator, what is he doing to help them see the error of their ways? 2. Is he tutoring and mentoring them? 3. Is he bringing successful young black business and professional persons to speak to his classes about excellence? 4. Is he pushing school administrators to provide more tutoring, counseling, and support programs? Or, in a book with the main prescriptive plan being to put an end to affirmative action, is he simply content to smugly ponder to white fears by peddling shopworn stereotypes to make a buck and a name for himself? The book is the self-evident answer to the question and could better be titled *The Self-Sabotage of John H. McWhorter*. *Earl Ofari Hutchinson*

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THE HOTS FOR  
YOU.



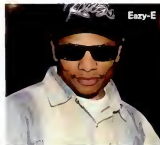
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## ANNOUNCING



Coretta Scott King and Tommy Hilfiger

• **The Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc.** showcased the winning model of a national monument dedicated to the slain civil rights leader at a September ceremony in Washington, D.C. "It will represent what we, the family, would like to see," said **Coretta Scott King**. The monument will be the first on the National Mall to honor an individual African-American. It is underwritten by **Tommy Hilfiger**, and the groundbreaking is scheduled for 2003. A map of the site is available at [www.mlkmemorial.org](http://www.mlkmemorial.org).



Eazy-E

• Documents from the two-year investigation by the **FBI** into allegations that associates of the militant Jewish Defense League tried to extort money from late rappers **Eric "Eazy-E" Wright** and **Tupac Shakur** via telephone threats were officially released in September and posted on the Web site [www.the-smokinggun.com](http://www.the-smokinggun.com). The probe was launched on April 15, 1997 and ended on May 18, 1999 after prosecutors failed to substantiate the claims.

• **Death Row Records CEO Suge Knight** will use some of the proceeds from the compilation album *Too Gangsta for Radio*—which includes songs by **Tupac**, the **Ruff Ryders**, **Treec**, **Crooked I**, and **Above the Law**—to set up the **Death Row Prisoner Appeal Fund**, according to label spokesman **Jonathan Wolfson**. Each year, a committee for the fund will choose one applicant from the state prison system and one in the federal prison system and help finance legal expenses for their appeal, **Wolfson** says.



James Perkins

• After nearly four decades under the reign of former segregationist **Joe Smitherman**, residents of **Selma, Ala.**, have elected businessman **James Perkins** as their first African-American mayor. "It is time to put the Civil War and civil rights history into a museum," Perkins said during his acceptance speech. He defeated the incumbent by 1,336 votes. "The defeat of Mayor Joe Smitherman after 37 years is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of Selma's black citizens and right-thinking white voters," **Kweisi Mfume**, president of the **NAACP**, said in a statement.



Outsidaz

• You're not going to find **Redman's** "Red Rum Raisin" or **Eminem's** "Vanilla No Ice" at **Baskin-Robbins** or **Haagen-Dazs**. The only place where hip hop meets ice cream is at **Outrageous Flavors**, an ice-cream parlor/deli launched by New Jersey rappers **Outsidaz**. The store was set up in the group's hometown of **Newark** to bring jobs into the community and raise revenue for the group. On any given day, you'll see the rappers hard at work, scooping it up. "It's not some establishment where we're getting rich," says **Young Zee**. "We just did it 'cause we all like ice cream."



Henry Louis Gates Jr.

• Shoring up support for their 'Net startup, **Harvard University professors Henry Louis Gates Jr.** and **Kwame Anthony Appiah** have sold **Africana.com** to **Time Warner Inc.** "The revenue model was slow to develop—let's put it that way," **Gates** told *The New York Times*. "I would have become worried about its future by next year unless there was some dramatic turnaround." Terms of the deal were not announced. The site is one of several devoted to people of African descent but is unique in its focus on educational content, health, and finance. **Gates** and **Appiah** will continue to work on the site as consultants.

## LAWSUITS

• A federal lawsuit filed against **Sean "Puffy" Combs** by the owners of gospel song "I'll Fly Away" was

settled out of court with final details resolved in September. **Albert E. Brumley & Sons, Inc.** sued **Puffy** for borrowing lyrics from his song without permission for his hit single "I'll Be Missing You," a tribute to the slain rapper **The Notorious B.I.G.** "We are very pleased with the settlement," says **Bob Brumley**. The original song, written by **Brumley's** father, **Albert Brumley**, was published in 1932 and appears in the film *The Apostle*, which starred **Robert Duvall**. It will also be featured in **George Clooney's** movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* due in theaters nationwide next year.

• **Bone Thugs-N-Harmony's Flesh-N-Bone** (born **Stanley Vernell Howse**), 27, was sentenced to 10 years in a California state prison on September 22 for threatening a friend with a semiautomatic weapon last December. He was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and possession of a firearm.

## CHARGED

• Three associates of the Boston rap group **Made Men** were charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon in the September nightclub attack on **Boston Celtics** forward **Paul Pierce**. According to the *Boston Herald*, **Tony Hurston**, 30, allegedly punched **Pierce** then hit him across the face with a bottle. **William Ragland**, 28, and **Trevor Watson**, 34, then allegedly stabbed the **NBA** star in the chest, back, and neck at **Boston** nightclub **Buzz Club**. **Pierce** was later released from **New England Medical Center**.

## DEATHS

• **Jazz-soul saxophonist Stanley Turrentine** died of a stroke on September 12. He was 66 years old.

Reporting by **David Crowley**, **Brett Johnson**, **David Wall Rice**, and **Samantha Wong**



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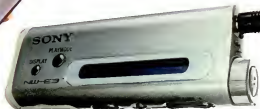
This holiday season, it's not about how large the box is but what's inside. It's the little things that count, so bigger doesn't always mean better. A mini walkman, diamond earrings, and a gold watch are just a few goodies you may find in small boxes this year. Whether it's for Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, show how much you care by slipping loved ones a li'l somethin', somethin'.  
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#### [www.luxlook.com](http://www.luxlook.com)

For a full line of current designer accessories from Dolce & Gabbana, Versace, Moschino, and many more, check out luxlook. This online shopping mecca ships all items in boutique packaging and even offers a selection of specially created exclusives.

#### [www.eshford.com](http://www.eshford.com)

With this site's extensive array of luxury fragrances, designer jewelry, leather accessories, sunglasses, and writing instruments from more than 300 leading brands (including Rolex, Tag Heuer, Calvin Klein, and Oakley), there's no way you won't be able to find the perfect gift for that special someone.

#### [www.sayshe.com](http://www.sayshe.com)

Calling all female shopaholics. Shop till ya drop—in your pajamas, in the office, or while jetting around town. This Internet megastore offers a range of women's goods, such as clothing, beauty products, accessories, and music.

#### [www.800giftcertificate.com](http://www.800giftcertificate.com)

For the person who's hard to shop for, how about gift certificates? Log on and you'll have your choice from hundreds of major retailers. Bath products, travel, electronics, home furnishings, and sporting goods are just a taste of what this site has to offer for the stumped present buyer in all of us.

#### [www.alwaysinstyle.com](http://www.alwaysinstyle.com)

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#### [www.ubo.com](http://www.ubo.com)

Spread some cheer with the first ever hip-hop-celebrity holiday greeting cards. Photographer Johnny Nunez's snapshots of artists such as Jadakiss, Busta Rhymes, Eve, and Lil' Kim grace the cards' covers. Purchase them online or at House of Nubian in New York City.

Gold mesh watch by Gucci Timepieces

Staring-silver disc cuff links with peridot stone by Robin Rotenier

Gold nameplate bamboo hoop earrings by Girishop.com and Diamond stud earrings by Service Merchandise

Ralph Lauren Romance for women by Ralph Lauren

Winter candle by Banana Republic

Holiday greeting cards by Johnny Nunez

# THE VIBe SPOT



Photos by Jimmy Nunez (1-8); Stone (9-12). Connection: In the November 2000 issue's VIBe Spot, photos 9 through 9 should have been credited to Col Barry.

**Bonding in Ocho Rios...** VIBE and Sashi hosted the hottest Caribbean event at Jamaica's very own James Bond Beach. (l-r) Junny Ann Hibbert, corporate accounts manager; Brian McKnight; Robin Gibson, advertising director; and Fred Jackson, marketing director. (l-r) Stephon Marbury, starting point guard New Jersey Nets; Big Tigger, host of BET's Rap City (far right); and Horatio Hamilton, L/O/Y Entertainment present a check to the representatives of Trench Town Development Fund. (l-r) Sashi 2000 producer, Ann Marie Adamson; event marketing and production, The Event Lab; Junny Ann Hibbert; Horatio Hamilton; and Robin Gibson. Arista Recording artist Next performed for all their Jamaican "wifey's".

**Costume National...** VIBE celebrates New York's fashion week at Costume's SoHo boutique. Breathe and stop! Arista recording artist Q-TIP strikes a pose. Contributing style editor Kidada Jones with DJ Samantha Ronson. Party people in the house! VIBE fashionistas share style stories and sip

Mojitos. (l-r) Kidada Jones; Beverly Smith, fashion advertising manager; Emil Wilbekin, editor-in-chief; and Paula Pritchett, store manager, Costume National.

"I need a 'round the way girl..." HOME-GIRL and Sayshe.com celebrate their launches at The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers. (l-r) Jeff Mazzacano, account executive, hookt.com; Faith Taylor, president, e-commerce, hookt.com and sayshe.com; Beverly Smith; Lynne McDaniel, president, sayshe.com; Tyler Blue, marketing director, sayshe.com; and president, Kenard Gibbs. Kenard Gibbs with true homegirl Lauren Hill. (l-r) Raquel Cepeda, editor-in-chief, sayshe.com; Motive/MCA recording artist Jaguar; Emil Wilbekin; Robin Gibson; and Beverly Smith. Robin Gibson thanks Adele Walker, print buyer, MediaCom for supplying Captain Morgan for the event. HOME-GIRL would like to thank Captain Morgan and our fuygirl DJs spinning on the one and two's; Samantha Ronson, Kaori, and Coco Chanel.

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# LOOK

STRICTLY FOR OUR SHORTIES

CARTIER WILLIAMS

## HOMEBOY HOOFER

He is 10 years old.

When Cartier Williams is onstage, no one can deny his magic. The preteen tap master, who made his stage debut at 4 years old, says he loves to dance. "It's not work, and I'm never scared or nervous," he says. "I just find one person [in the audience] to look at. Then it's like you're just dancing for one person. It's fun."

Cartier lives with his mom in Washington, D.C. He has met with President Clinton eight times and has visited the White House twice. He has been puddle-hopping for years, and Germany is one of his favorite layovers because "they have really, really good ice cream." When Cartier isn't on tour with his mentor, Savion Glover, in the tap concert Footnotes or appearing with him in Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* as Lil' Nigger Jim or wowing the audience on Oprah or performing for foreign dignitaries, he likes to play with his "wrestlin' men"—his World Wrestling Federation action figures.

There was a girl in his life, "but she was going that way, and I was going that way, so it wasn't working out." Cartier admits his biggest disappointment to date was when "I asked Santa Claus for a roller coaster for Christmas when I was 4 but I didn't get it."

All in all, though, Cartier is happy. He says his aspirations are all about tap. **Sam Slovick**

Photograph by LOIS GREENFIELD

VIEW 89



Jim Carrey sizes up the enemy in Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

KID DECONSTRUCTION

# THE GRINCH WHO SOLD OUT

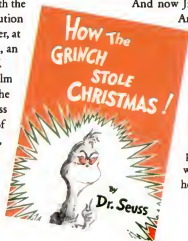
Zadie Smith, the author of *White Teeth*, takes on a modern myth

**C**hristmas means a lot in America. It means a great deal throughout the Western world, no doubt, but it's a bigger deal here because it's an opportunity to celebrate two of the country's most fundamental values: capitalism and Christianity. In keeping with the holiday's cultural significance, America's contribution to the Christmas industry has been huge. However, at the core of the American Christmas lies, in fact, an English story, Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

Dickens's novella formed the basis for the 1901 film *Scrooge*, one of the earliest silent movies, and in the past century, Hollywood has retold the tale no less than 12 times. And that's not counting the dozens of TV specials and stage shows, the *Moonlighting* parody, the perennial favorite *It's a Wonderful Life*, or 1992's *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (though my list includes the Mr. Magoo animated version and *John Grin's*

*Christmas*, a 1986 African-American adaptation by Robert Guillaume). Personal redemption and turkey have long been served up together in the American imagination.

And now Jim Carrey, rubber-faced clown-turned-chronicler of American virtues—truth (*Liar Liar*), justice (*Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*), and the American way (*The Truman Show*)—stars in yet another thinly veiled *Carol* update, the live-action **Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas***. Although the Grinch differs from Scrooge in a few crucial respects—namely pointy fingers, lack of genitalia, and all-over body hair—basically, we're looking at the same guy. Mean, curmudgeonly, and fervently anti-Christmas, the Grinch is Ebenezer by another name; a slightly more proactive version, perhaps, because the Grinch doesn't just want to ignore Christmas, he wants to ruin it. But why? Well, he lives north of *Who*-ville instead of in *Who*-ville proper,



and he's a Grinch surrounded by *Whos* (if he's not a foreigner or an immigrant then he's definitely "other"). Is that why the Grinch hates and fears the *Whos*, dreads their presents and their food? Is the Grinch really a black man in America? Or is he just a commie spoilsport? Dr. Seuss, a.k.a. Grinch creator **Theodor Geisel** (1904–1991), is ambiguous with explanations in his book:

It could be his head wasn't screwed on just right.  
It could be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight.  
But I think that the most likely reason of all  
May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.

A glimpse at the Carrey film's Web site would suggest it's the emotional angle they'll be working when the Grinch comes to our screens (there's not a lot of cinematic mileage to be got out of loose heads and tight shoes). Here you will find a cast list that includes the ominous promise of Young Grinch—this suggests to me a flashback from the Grinch's unhappy childhood, something Seuss himself thankfully omits in the original book. Should we be surprised? *A Christmas Carol* and its derivatives were always about childhood trauma. Long before Freud, Dickens was fascinated by how one might dig into the past and discover the damaged child behind the damaged man.

In Dr. Seuss's tale, the Grinch is mean because he just is. He hates the *Who*-girls and he hates the *Who*-boys, he hates all the toys and the NOISE NOISE NOISE NOISE. You got that? He's just not down with the whole Christmas thing, alright? In the tradition of the best black fight heroes, Mr. Grinch is one bad MF. He has to be: Seuss's Grinch is alienated simply because he's different. He doesn't look like anybody in *Who*-ville and he doesn't like the stuff they like. He's not into their music or their food.



And most of all, he's not into the rampant consumerism of the *Who*-ville Christmas, so he decides to steal the whole show.

Not for himself, you understand, but so he can go dump it off the end of Mount Crumpit. He's kind of like those kids in Seattle smashing up Starbucks—he's making a political protest. He wants to make the *Whos*

hurt, the way we sometimes want Mr. Clinton and Mr. Blair to hurt, just once, just a little, so they can remember those unlucky people north of *Who*-ville who hurt all the time. And, like Scrooge, when the Spirit of Christmas™ is revealed to the Grinch, the evils of consumerism fall from his eyes:

It came without ribbons! It came without tags!  
It came without packages, boxes, or bags!  
"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store.  
"Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!"

Well done, Mr. Grinch! It means the birth of Christ and the offering of goodwill to all men and the singing of the *Who*-Christmas song! So far so good—but, in fact, at this point the Grinch lets us down, or maybe the genre does. In the end, this is an American Christmas fable and the bottom line is this: No one must get hurt. Accordingly, the Grinch turns out to be more like Martin Luther King Jr. than Malcolm X. Luckily for the *Whos*, the Grinch realizes just in time that whatever country you came from and no matter how far north of *Who*-ville you were born, once you hit *Who*-Ellis Island, Christmas means presents. And food. And lots of it. (When in Rome...) So he brings back the toys and the food for the feast! And he, he himself, carves the roast beast!

In an American Christmas, you always get to have your Christmas cake and eat it too.

## KID DIVAS

# LI'L HEROES

Move over superdudes, here comes something meaner

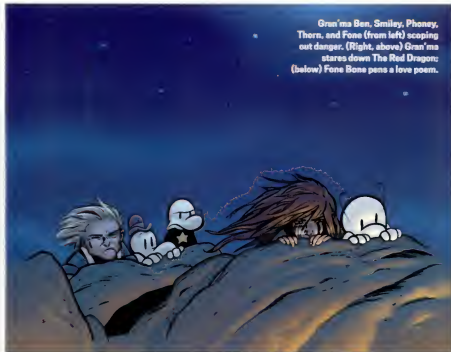
**T**hey'd eviscerate the Spice Girls and put Cherlie's Angels to shame. Animated grrrrl-power gladiators Blossom, Buttercup, and Bubbles form the superhero trinity the **Powerpuff Girls**: three bug-eyed shorties who live the saccharine thug life, battling big meanie monsters while being so cute. Holding court on the Cartoon Network's No. 1 series (an Emmy winner for Best Direction), the Girls are about to whup ess through the holiday season with their first two-DVD compilation of 20 action-packed episodes and an interactive game.

The show sets a precedent in the flex-off's of pop animation's history, placing these fierce little ladies at the heart of an entire town's safety. With vicious attitude and flying fists, the Girls accomplish what their lame professor dad and even lemer mayor can't—thus gender (and age!) bending the rules of hypermasculine superheroism. "Almost all of the villains are men, and the male characters have become idiots," says PPG creator Craig McCracken. "I don't know how that happened, but the Girls—along with the other female characters—are really positive role models."

Not only do they reassure us that it's hot to be hard and soft (a cute kitten will melt their hearts), the Girls satisfy the needs of a teeming psyche by fusing aggression (Buttercup!), joy (Bubbles), and a little bit of reason (Blossom) into each episode. "People respond to the Girls because they see themselves in each one of them," says McCracken. So tune in, find yourself, and start kicking some butt!

Rebecca Louisie





Gran'ma Ben, Smiley, Phoney, Thorn, and Fone (from left) scoping out danger. (Right, above) Gran'ma stares down The Red Dragon; (below) Fone Bone pens a love poem.



COMICS

# DEM BONES

A celebrated cartoonist (and dad) on one of the best kid's comics ever

**W**hen the title *Bone* (Cartoon Books) first appeared on comic-book racks in 1991, many savvy parents had the following reaction: "Bone? Why do they have to put the porno right next to the children's comics?"

Well, as hip children everywhere can tell you, **Jeff Smith's** *Bone* is a kid's comic book. And it's clean. It's so clean, in fact, it *squeaks*. The fast-growing legion of tiny *Bone* fans have made the books and toys so popular that kiddie-entertainment monolith Nickelodeon is discussing a *Bone* movie.

The comics tell the lighthearted adventures of the Bone cousins Smiley, Fone, and Phoney in a strange, enchanted land of dragons, princesses, and talking baby animals—and witches and ancient curses and prophecies and all that fun stuff your folks used to read to you.

And plagues of locusts, 20-foot-tall fanged hairy beasts, and Rat Creatures—all of whom take turns trying to eat the Bone family and their friends. The knuckleheaded monsters supply these stories with plenty of thrills and chases, but they're so silly and funny that kids won't freak out and cry.

The three Bone cousins each have distinct personalities: Smiley's smiley, Phoney's phony, and Fone's a sweetheart, the brains and heart of the outfit. They bicker and get in each other's way like all families, but they also stick together—a novelty in the age of Bart and Butthead.

One of the earlier books in the series (there are six collected volumes

so far), *The Great Cow Race*, showcases Gran'ma Ben, an old lady with Popeye-like strength who can outrun a cattle stampede. I hate to give away too many surprises, but there's an elaborate gambling scheme that involves two of the Bones passing themselves off as the front and back halves of a cow. The big race at the climax is a riot. (Note to storytellers: Races are always exciting.)

Imagine a 200-page chase. The ingenious, graphic *Rock Jaw* novel is exactly that. The Bones, ever in the soup, having just escaped from a horde of Rat Creatures and a giant monster, run right into a 25-foot-tall mountain lion named Rock Jaw, who chases them! The Bones are rescued by the cutest little baby animals you ever saw; they're so cute and cuddly they make Disney look like a soulless corporate merchandise mill. Then there's more chasing, even more friends, and before you know it about 25 good guys are being chased by 50 bad guys! And every one of the zillion characters has a unique set of personality traits and flaws and dreams that are developed amid the pandemonium. It's *Pokémon* done better.

And drawn better. Jeff Smith applies tremendous attention and skill to the craft of illustration, in spite of the fact that *Dilbert* and *South Park* have proved that good drawing is no longer required by cartoon fans. Good for him.

You'll enjoy reading *Bone* comics to your kids, like we do here. *Kylie Baker*

For more information, go to [www.boneville.com](http://www.boneville.com).

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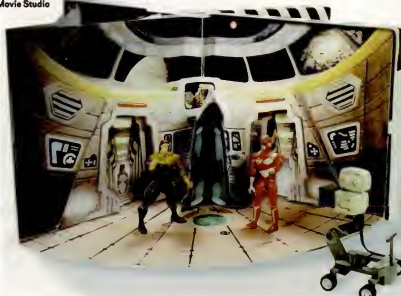
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# LOOK STRICTLY FOR OUR SHORTIES

Actors never compete for close-ups with the Virtual Movie Studio



## KIDDIE TECH

### LIGHTS, CAMERA, KEEP IT DOWN!

How to keep the youngbloods of cinema busy in your living room

Been aching to do an *X-Men* version of "Whassup"? Curious Toys' **Virtual Movie Studio** (\$200, ages 8 and up, 212-674-1400-232) has everything your kids need to shoot the tabletop opus of their dreams: a mini color video camera, a rolling dolly, an audio amp, a cast of four action heroes—and a three-set, intergalactic, pop-up stage, featuring a flight deck, a planet surface, and a ship's bridge. Other stage kits will soon be available, making it easy to film

anything from *COPS*-style action to medieval crusades. And though the Virtual Movie Studio targets the younger filmmaker, it's guaranteed you'll end up borrowing it from the tykes to shoot your own desktop dramas. The miniature rolling dolly allows a variety of shots, including tracking, pans, and close-ups. The camera and microphone can be plugged directly into a VCR and television—or you can hook it up to a computer using a USB adapter, making

it easier to animate, edit, and debut your masterpiece on the Web. Because Virtual Movie Studio is so versatile and simple to use, it's very kid-friendly and definitely not a toy that will end up in the back of the closet next to the Junior Genius Kitchen Chemistry Set. However, it *is* best for desktop use—so if you've been dying to do your own *Blair Witch Project* sequel, better plan on casting Barbie and her friends to star. *Lancer Still*

## EDUTAINMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL

It's well established that the earlier someone studies a topic, the easier it is to grasp. Most adults barely comprehend the laws of gravity that keep them from flying into deep space. That's only one reason to be thankful for PBS's *Standard Deviants TV*—a youth-oriented educational series that's to *Schoolhouse Rock* what Sega PlayStation is to *Space Invaders*. With breezy narration, comical skits, and state-of-the-art computer graphics, *SDTV* provides exhaustive primers on a wide array of topics (like Shakespeare or the origins of U.S. government). And it's all so lucid, even an adult might retain the knowledge. The series is also available on VHS cassette; click on [www.standarddeviants.com](http://www.standarddeviants.com) for ordering information.




Mary C. Turck's *The Civil Rights Movement for Kids: A History with 21 Activities* (Chicago Review Press) is an extraordinary book designed to help children (ages 9 and up) become more proactive as they learn about how American racial inequality was successfully fought during the last century. Turck provides simple—yet never simplistic—definitions of subjects such as racism and civil disobedience, and her book's activities are geared toward putting children in the mind-set of the period with great sensitivity and psychological acuity. *Robert Morales*



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## LOWDOWN

## REEL TO REAL NEWS FROM THE HOLLYWEIRD

Ready for another *Scary Movie*? When a film rakes in more than \$150 million, you have to give the people what they want. Director **Keenen Ivory Wayans** is working with his acting/writing brothers **Shawn** and

Keenen Ivory Wayans



**Marlon** on having a *Scary Movie II* in theaters by next May. *Daily Variety* reports that one guy who won't be involved with the sequel is one of the original *Scary* cowriters, **Buddy Johnson**, who also coproduced

*The Wayans Bros.* TV show. Johnson is waiting to see whether Columbia Pictures will greenlight his script for *Whitey*, about a silver-tongued New York con man framed for murder....

It looks like **Orlando Jones** made a good call when he ditched *Mad TV* to write and act in movies. The Southern-born thespian will star in Columbia's *Redneck*, based on his own story idea about a black Alabama lad raised by a white family who thinks his skin color is caused by a medical condition. Columbia may also move forward with another Jones idea, *The Reverend Pimp Daddy*, a *Pretty Woman* in reverse about a good-hearted pimp.... If you thought big guy **Anthony Anderson** was a scene-grabber in *Me, Myself & Irene* and *Big Momma's House*, wait till he and **DMX** turn up in the Warner Bros.

action thriller *Exit Wounds*, from *Romeo Must Die* producer **Joel Silver** and director **Andrzej Bartkowiak**. Also, Anderson gives his *Big Momma* costar **Martin Lawrence**



Orlando Jones

what-for in the upcoming action comedy *See Spot Run*.... **Reginald Hudlin** isn't wasting any time after directing **Tim Meadows** in *The Ladies Man*. He'll soon helm the romantic action-comedy *Servicing Sarah*, in

which **Matthew Perry** will play a process server who falls in love with the sexy hottie who's his target.... According to *Daily Variety*, **Mekhi Phifer** and **Kevin Carroll** are currently before the cameras in *Paid in Full*, based on the true story of a Harlem kid who built a drug empire in the '80s before seriously changing his ways. Director **Charles Stone III** makes his big-screen bow on this

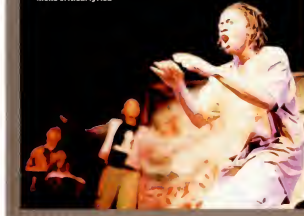
one, but you probably already know him as the guy who created and stars in those much celebrated "Whas-sup?!" Budweiser beer ads.... *Daily Variety* reports that hot hip hop newcomer **Nelly** stars in the thriller *Snipes*, currently filming in Philadelphia. The flick is about a rap star who gets kidnapped just before his album is released. Expect cameos by **Schoolly D**, **Kool Moe Dee**, and **Fat Joe**.

Stephen Rebbello



Nelly

Actor Jabari Exum kicks critical lyrics



## THEATER

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

Battling sibling MCs in a Cain and Abel street saga? The Hip-Hop Theater Junction's *Rhyme Deferred* critiques mainstream music trends, challenging the big-pimpin' lifestyle with righteous raps from the underground.

"We're putting our stamp on theater, taking hip-hop-based performance elements as far as they can go onstage," says writer/director Kamillah Forbes. "Like, what does it mean if the DJ is a character, speaking in samples and sounds? How can we communicate with just rhythm, as opposed to words? That was really my first and foremost intention, and the story came after."

With five D.J.s, B-boys, and sophisticated verses, the Washington, D.C. troupe crafts a smart and mythical exploration of hip-hop's evolution, reminding us of the integrity of the art form, the richness of black oral traditions, and that it isn't always all about the Benjamins.

Rebecca Louis



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# LOOKTASTER'S CHOICE

## Everything the stars can't live without Compiled by Xenela González and Rebecca Laue

### CHRISTINA AGUILERA.

Latina pop princess, gives us some savor with her new Spanish-language album, *Mi Reflejo*

■ **Favorite movie:** *The Sound of Music*. It inspired me to sing at 5 years old. To this day, I still know every word. I had the soundtrack on tape, and I would take it up to my bedroom, shut the door, open the window, and sing like Julie Andrews in the hills!

▼ **Favorite scent:** Heavenly Velvet Luxe Lotion, by Victoria's Secret. I put it on every night before I go to bed. It's a light, refreshing, "I just got out of the bath and I want to smell pretty before I go to bed" kind of lotion. I'm into lotions, because some perfumes give me a headache.

■ **Holiday wish:** To be home. We have a family tradition where, every time somebody does something good, we put a few strands of straw in an empty cradle. Depending on how good people are, our small Jesus doll will have a soft bed to lay in. My mother does this every year, just to make sure people remember the goodness of Christmas.



TONY GONZALEZ, Pro Bowl tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, sponsors a charity called The Shadow Buddies Foundation

■ **Favorite artists:** A Tribe Called Quest. They're just so positive, talking about partying and hanging out. Nothing against hardcore rap, but when they're degrading women and talking about money and all these status symbols, after awhile it just gets like, c'mon man, what's really important in life?

▼ **Favorite book:** *The Mastery of Love*, by Don Miguel Ruiz. I'm big into inner peace, and this book is a guide. It helps in any relationship—male-

female, one with your mother, your brother, your dog, nature, trees—basically, your relationship with life. It's really good.

■ **Holiday wish:** I'd like a gift certificate for an all-expenses-paid trip to Spain where Brazilian model Gisele Bündchen—I have a poster of her in my locker—greet me with keys to a 1964 GTO convertible. And with those keys, I also want a Super Bowl ring.



LIL' ZANE, the actor-cum-rapper, is riding high with his debut album, *Young World: The Future*

■ **Favorite gadget:** Motorola PageWriter 2000X. I'm so mad because the CEO of my company just lost my pager. He said, "I'll buy you another one." But, man, that's not the point. I worked hard to get all them numbers. I had Michael Jordan's and Magic Johnson's two-way—I had everybody that I loved in there.

▼ **Favorite TV show:** *Martin*. Like on the show, I've got two friends that always come over. I do some of the same stuff. "I'll be like, 'Yo, don't you got somewhere to go? If you ain't gotta go, you gotta get the hell outta here!' I think Martin's in everybody's heart.

■ **Holiday wish:** In my stocking, I want 5 million receipts from everybody that bought my album. Then, when my record company says I still owe them money, I'll say, "I have 5 million receipts right here, and it shows that y'all have made your money back." Ha, ha!



JUDGE HATCHETT lays down the law on her daily courtroom TV series, *Judge Hatchett*

■ **Favorite book:** *Long Walk to Freedom*, by Nelson Mandela. It's such a powerful piece about commitment, courage, and faith. I still remember being riveted to my television the morning he was released, with tears rolling down my face, because I always worried that he would die in prison. He's one of my heroes.

■ **Favorite song:** "I Believe I Can Fly," by R. Kelly. I used to always tell kids in my court that they needed to adopt it as their theme song, and that they really needed to believe in themselves. It's a wonderful song.

▼ **Holiday wish:** Keys to a souped-up, fire-engine-red convertible Mustang. Fancy rims, five-speed, manual transmission, big engine... vroom, vroom, vroom! I'd take it to the beach, my favorite place in the world. No matter how complicated or stressful things

maybe, if I can get to the water, it's instantly soothing.



CHRISTINA AGUILERA: SEAN MURPHY; TONY GONZALEZ: AP; LIL' ZANE: MICHAEL BENJAMIN; MARTIN: PHOTOPOST

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# TECHNO > FILE

## VIBE gets digital with this season's hottest gadgets

Edited by Hyun Kim

Stereo and record companies strive to deliver a product that's captivating in sound and stunning in looks. TAG McLaren Audio's FI AvantGarde loudspeakers and Mya's *Fear of Flying* possess that rare combination of beauty, quality, grace, and performance. The \$30,000 FIs are carefully crafted by the same engineers responsible for the world-renowned TAG Heuer watches and Formula One race cars. Sleek in design and rich in sound, the speakers re-create the resonance of a live concert performance in your very own room. If you want loud, rumbling bass, go somewhere else. TAG McLaren is all about sophistication, preferring to blow your mind rather than your eardrums. Like the speakers, Mya is pushing the limits of her field with a blend of sexy dance moves and sultry lyrics. Transcending all boundaries, TAG McLaren Audio's FI AvantGarde and Mya represent the future of technology and music.



Photograph by DAVID DREBIN

STYLING BY ALI EDWARDS; HAIR BY ERIC SPEARMAN/704 ILLUSSIONS; HAIR BY ANDIE PHIPPS; BLACK BICHER TOP BY JAZPHIN; BLACK LEATHER PANTS BY CUSTOMER NATIONAL; TECHNOLOGY SAFETY EQUIPMENT CLOTHING BY PALACE 301 TAG

## PALM READING



1

2



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4

**1) CASIO CASSIOPEIA EM-500, \$500**

A skinny little device that's fat with extras, the EM-500 runs on Microsoft Windows' Pocket PC operating system and comes equipped with a serious 16MB of internal memory for hefty Excel and Word documents. The Cassiopeia can automatically synchronize phone lists, notes, calendar entries, and inbox items every time you dock to the mothership PC. EM-

Trash the messy date book and get organized with one of these sleek personal digital assistants. *By Alex Porter*

500 also runs short video clips and displays still pictures on the color LCD screen. Choose from five color faceplates (blue, red, sky blue, green, or yellow).

**UPSIDE:** It plays MP3s and features a stereo headphone jack, a pile of useful software, and a multimedia card slot for up to 64MB of additional RAM.

**DOWNSIDE:** Expensive multimedia cards are required for storing more than two MP3s or video files.

**FOR:** Multitasking, multimedia players.

**2) ERICSSON R380, \$500**

Ericsson combines the most useful Palmtop and mobile-phone functions into one package. The R380 utilizes an impressive new operating system by EPOC and the "beam me up Scotty"-style, flip-open cover conceals a backlit screen with a flood of options (handwriting recognition with included stylus, touch-screen keypad, calendar, address book, memo pad, etc.). Tap a command on the screen and it calls or sends e-mail. The phone works on most GSM networks and features voice-activated dialing, note recording, and Web browsing. A light, tight package.

**UPSIDE:** Liberates you from electronic clutter. Syncs to your PC and swaps info with applications such as MS Outlook and Exchange.

**DOWNSIDE:** The expandability is limited, the operating system is unproven, and the gray-scale screen is small.

**FOR:** Fashion-conscious light travelers who can't have a cell phone, pager, and personal digital assistant (PDA) ruining their outfit.

**3) PALM M 100, \$150**

Consider this the Volkswagen Beetle of PDAs—colorful, practical, and affordable. Powered by the Palm OS, the M 100 supplies the usual address book, infrared port, to-do and scheduling set-up, and Graffiti text-entering system.

**UPSIDE:** The M 100 accepts five color faceplates and is Macintosh friendly. Great bang for your buck.

**DOWNSIDE:** The monochromatic screen is small, and the docking cradle is sold as a separate item (the M 100 uses two AAA batteries). It only comes with one color faceplate. Extras are sold separately. Features only 2MB of memory.

**FOR:** High-profile, low-price types—students, kids, etc. Want a Lexus? Go for the Palm Vx.

**4) SONY CLIE, \$400**

The Picture Gear Pocket software (included) lets you put a digital photo beside the digits and address of your next hot date. Clie uses the ubiquitous Palm operating system, comes with 8MB storage, and accepts a removable Memory Stick of up to 64MB. Included cradle charges the lithium ion battery and syncs with your PC.

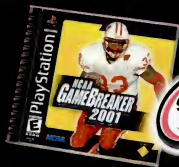
**UPSIDE:** The sleek Clie looks hot, jogdial operation allows for one-handed use, and the Media application lets you watch short video clips.

**DOWNSIDE:** A bit pricey for a monochromatic screen and no Macintosh support. The features don't stand out when compared to new entries.

**FOR:** Playboys and girls who can't keep names end faces straight.



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# EXPLOSIVE

Most home entertainment systems don't come close to touching the sound of Alpine's tricked-out Ford Excursion. **Funkmaster Flex** tests it out and blasts off. By Neil Rodriguez and Hyun Kim

**Y**ou can hear this in Canada!" screams Funkmaster Flex in his trademark Intonation. His words are quickly drowned out by 4,500 watts of DMDC's "Party Up," pumping from the 14 subwoofers, 20 speakers, and eight amplifiers inside Alpine's Play Loud demo 2000 Ford Excursion. The largest SUV on the market, the nine-passenger truck bellows sound north from its Yonkers, N.Y., locale. It was gutted specifically to accommodate the customized super-multi-media system. The V12 amps and Type-R subwoofers are wrapped in a futuristic fiberglass casing and neon striping, leaving room for only four passengers. Five 8.5-inch LCD monitors (one in the dash, two in the back, two overhead)

are capable of independent viewing of the DVD player, VCR, television, or Nintendo 64. The front of the truck features a DVD navigation unit and a six-CD changer. The massive system took nine weeks to assemble. Retail price: \$100,000. And it wouldn't be complete without the 20-inch chrome rims.

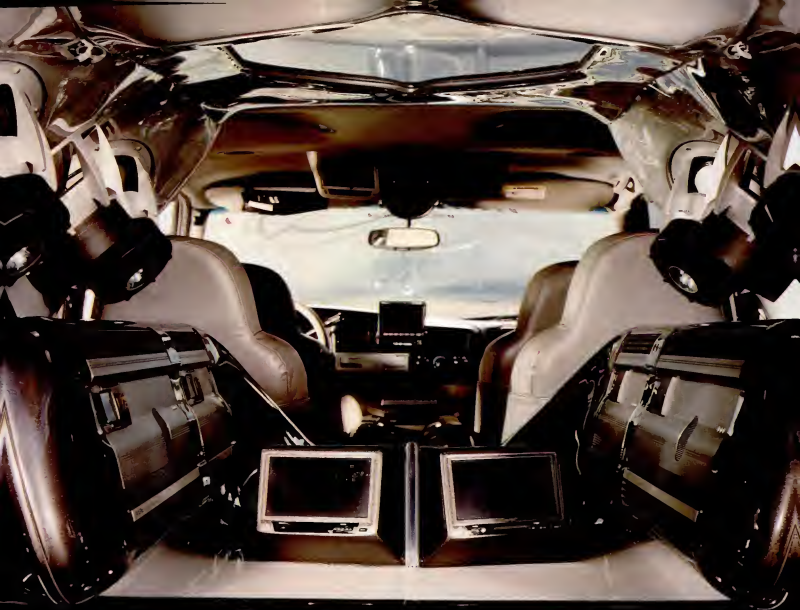
Flex's obsession with wheels extends beyond the turntables he stands behind every night. While his favorite ride of the moment is the red 2001 GMC Yukon XL, Flex has been into refurbishing old cars for the past four years. One of his prized possessions is a '66 Impala he bought from a woman in Connecticut for \$4,000. "I'm doing it over," he says. "Gold with white leather interior

and 17-inch Cragger rims."

The upcoming release of Flex's *VIBE Hits* compilation, as well as the fourth installment of his *60 Minutes of Funk* series, featuring Eminem, Nelly, M.O.P., and Three 6 Mafia, should get plenty of spins in his 2000 Mercedes-Benz S500. But today, in the Alpine-modified Excursion, a Garth Brooks CD could pass the Flex sound-system test. "You can't even go to the mall for a minute," jokes Flex. "Cause they will rip this out the car.

There ain't no type of alarm you can have to keep cats from taking this."





**ALPINE**

**BOOMIN' SYSTEM:** Alpine's \$100,000 Play Loud multimedia entertainment system inside a \$45,000 Ford Excursion. Shown: Five LCD monitors, four amps, and four subwoofers

Photographs by **DAVID DREBIN**

## CELL THERAPY

You can do much more than talk on today's cell phones. *By Alex Parter*



**Samsung Upror SPHM100 (S400)**  
Includes a built-in MP3 player with 64MB of memory for up to an hour of music.



**Motorola V2282 (S99-S198)**  
Doubles as an FM radio and accepts rubber or plastic "wraps" in 13 different colors.



**Ericsson T28 WORLD (S99-S198)**  
The compact T28 works in 120 countries and takes clip-on accessories like FM radio, wireless headset, and MP3 player.



**Nokia 8260 (S500)**  
Features two-way text messaging, downloadable ring tones, and a 250-listing capacity of names, numbers, and e-mail addresses.

## LEADERS OF THE NEW SCHOOL

Artists take their hustle online. *By Steven E. Samuel*

Recent mega-sized label mergers have left artists to fend for themselves in the struggle for creative control. That's why more acts are setting their sights on Web sites to level the playing field. Here are three that are leading the way.

**HIEROGLYPHICS.COM**

**Founders:** Stink E Kai, Webmaster, and the Hieroglyphics (Souls of Mischief, Del the Funky Homosapien, Casual) **Overview:** After being let go by major labels, the San Francisco Bay Area-based group has resurfaced on the Internet. Founder Stink E. started the site as a hobby in 1995 and was later approached by the group to make it their official online home. **Features:** News, message board, audio, videos, and lyrics. The Emporium offers Hiero vinyl, CDs, tapes, and clothing and doubles as the group's record label.

**OKAYPLAYER.COM**

**Founders:** 2uestlove, Angela "Webmis" Nissel **Overview:** Winner of The Online Hip-Hop Awards 2000 Best New Website category, okayplayer.com has been "giving you true sites since 1999." It houses online properties for the Roots, Common, D'Angelo, Jazzyfatnastees, and


Dilated Peoples. **Features:** Updated news, chat room, tour-date listings, message board, and store.

**RAPSTATION.COM**

**Founders:** Chuck D **Overview:** Moving away from the mike and into the digital world, Chuck brings knowledge and insightful political criticism to the online hip hop community. With more than 20 partners, including Napster and Real Networks, Rapstation.com has been a champion of file sharing since 1999. **Features:** Artist interviews, news, MP3 downloads, message boards, and original TV and radio programming.







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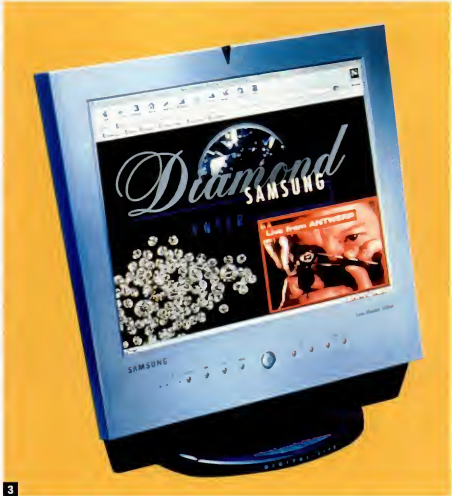
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1



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3

# SEEING IS BELIEVING

Three gadgets that will catch your eye and put it to use. *By Mark Brooks*

## 1) SHARP VL-FD1U (\$1,500)

This lightweight digital camcorder is small enough to be held in one (large) hand, yet the FD1U is pecked with enough features to make quality no-budget flicks. It also captures sharp images that you can easily add simple special effects to, like strobe, inverse black/white, and slow-mo. With the cool 3.5-inch touch monitor, you can also add your own scribbles or hand-written notes to your clips. The camera (200x zoom), which can shoot from any angle, also takes decent but somewhat grainy still shots. Instead of wasting time in an editing room, you can plug the FD1U into a computer equipped with a Firewire (e.k.a. IEEE 1394) or an RS-232 PC port for advanced computer editing. The VL-FD1U is easy to use and has a plethora of options.

It probably won't help you win an Oscar for your Freeknik footage, but it might help an amateur actor look like a star.

## 2) PANASONIC DVD-LV75 (\$1,400)

Whether you're riding in a plane, train, or automobile, your favorite flicks are never out of arm's length. The 2.4-pound box sports a seven-inch (diagonal) screen that produces an excellent picture that remains sharp end in focus no matter how fast the action gets. Sadly, like most portables, the meager speakers can't compete with even a crappy set of headphones. But when it's hooked up to your home theater, you'll be able to hear excellent Dolby Digital and DTS audio without a decoder—a big plus. Cinema fiends who can't survive without watching The

Matrix on a regular basis will be happy to peep Keanu on this player while they're flying high in the clouds.

## 3) SAMSUNG 150MP (\$1,120)

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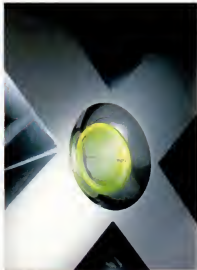
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## GAME RECOGNIZE GAME

Microsoft stacks its chips with the release of its new video-game console, the Xbox

For most players, PlayStation 2 is the latest and greatest video-game system. But for true joystick riders, it's all about the Xbox. This new gaming console from Microsoft won't be out until fall of 2001, but it already has gamers salivating like it's a Star Wars prequel. Like PS2, Xbox will be able to play DVDs as well as games. It also has a built-in hard drive to save games, a modem for Internet play, and four controller ports for when you feel like kicking someone's butt. The only title announced so far is the futuristic combat game *Halo*, but a number of top developers are herd at work, including the people behind *X-Wing Alliance*, *Motocross Madness 2*, and *Block & White*. Thanks to the Xbox, Bill Gates is sure to see more zeroes on his checks. P.S.

# RATED H FOR HIP HOP

From in-line skates to mutant secret agents, reigns supreme on four new video-game titles  
By Paul Semel

## JET GRIND RADIO

**Maker:** Sega. **System:** Dreamcast. **Concept:** To promote your crew, you roller blade around town and bomb the city graffiti-style. **Execution:** Blading and spraying involve numerous button combos and careful stick movements. **The good:** Sliding on a handrail, tagging a car, and then leaping off onto another rail. **The bad:** Cops can shoot you in the back then beat you like an egg. **Look:** Think *Parappa the Rapper* if he went rava, 3-D, and slightly cubist. **Sound:** Jurassic 5, Mix Master Mike, and Rob Zombie. **Bottom line:** Fun to watch but even more fun to play. **Rating:** 4.5



## MADDEN NFL 2001

**Maker:** EA Sports. **System:** PlayStation2, PlayStation, Nintendo 64, PC Game Boy Color. **Concept:** The archetypal football video game returns for its 11th season. **Execution:** Closer to a real-time strategy war game than a smash-'em-up arcade game. **The good:** Watching Warren Sapp savagely sack QBs. **The bad:** Emphasis on strategy will tax the patience of armchair quarterbacks. **Look:** The PS2 and PC versions look almost like a live broadcast. **Sound:** Xzibit and the Beatnuts. **Bottom line:** Like past Madden outings, this is the football game for hardcore pigskin freaks. **Rating:** 4



## SANITY: AIKEN'S ARTIFACT

**Maker:** Fox Interactive. **System:** PC. **Concept:** Like some X-Men, you're a good guy with special mental powers called "psionic talents." **Execution:** Think arcade shooter crossed with a strategic role-playing game. **The good:** Using a push psionic to knock bad guys off cliffs. **The bad:** Excessive psionic usage drives characters insane. **Look:** The perspective is aerial, but the decor is Quake-esque. **Sound:** Ice-T is the voice of Agent Nathaniel Cain (one of the lead characters) and performs the theme song with Body Count. **Bottom line:** Those with itchy trigger fingers will think it's slow, but fans of X-Men and role-playing games like *Magic: The Gathering* will love it. **Rating:** 4



## TONY HAWK PRO SKATER 2

**Maker:** Activision. **System:** Dreamcast, PlayStation, Nintendo 64, Game Boy Color, PC CD-ROM. **Concept:** Once again, it's skata or die. **Execution:** Different button combos yield various but hopefully cool moves. **The good:** Creating your own skate park without the hassles of zoning permits. **The bad:** The create-a-skater mode might give you a God complex. **Look:** The skaters and parks look like the real deal. **Sound:** Public Enemy with Anthrax, Naughty by Nature, Rage Against the Machine, the High & Mighty, and others. **Bottom line:** New features and more functional controls make *Skater 2* a slight improvement over the original. **Rating:** 4

Ratings are on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the best.



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## HI-TECH EXEC

Def Jam/Def Soul President Kevin Liles stays plugged in with his gadgets. *By Kenya N. Byrd*

**K**evin Liles—writer of Milli Vanilli's 1989 pop hit "Girl You Know It's True"—may breathe, eat, and sleep music, but that doesn't make being the president of Def Jam/Def Soul easy. Power meetings, conference calls, and contract negotiations keep this former Def Jam intern running from early in the morning till the wee hours of the night. Liles's supportive staff and state-of-the-art gadgets help him stay on top of his game. He even provided two-way pagers for

all of his employees and artists. During a session at Def Jam's newly built in-house studio, Liles, 32, broke down the essential tech ingredients that make him tick.

**PHONE CHECK:** "I own a Motorola V8160 [S800]. I also carry my earpiece around because I don't want radiation in my brain. I like the V8160 because I can throw it right on my hip or slip it in my pocket. And let's not forget the caller ID."



The many gadget styles of Kevin Liles

**PAGER:** "I got the Motorola Timeport P935 [S400]. Its main function is interface e-mail. Most of my artists, staff, and executives can get me on my cell phone, but sometimes I don't want to talk to people. I just want to say 'yes' or 'no.'"

**ILL PALM:** "I got the Palm Vx [S400] with all my games on it. I got *BlackJack*, *Backgammon*, *Crossword*, *Pac-Man*, *Checkers*, and *Spades*, but my favorites are *Dope Wars* and *Dope Wars 2000*. Someone created these drug games; they didn't come with the Palm. For example, if I'm playing *Dope Wars* and I choose the Bronx in the ghetto, it will tell me, 'Weed prices have bottomed out.'"

**LIGHT WEIGHT:** "When I'm on a plane, I don't really like carrying my computer, so I carry my Palm Portable Keyboard [S99]. I hook it up to my Palm Handheld to type memos. Then, when I get back to the office, I download them."

**MUSIC BOX:** "I don't like carrying a lot of CDs, so I download everything from my computer into my MP3 player [Creative NOMAD Jukebox, S500]. I call it the Def Jam Jukebox. It holds 100 hours of music—mostly new stuff from my artists."

**BIG PIMPIN' TOTAL:** \$1,999



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## MUSIQ SOULCHILD

### Musiquarium

PHOTOGRAPH BY KWAKU ALSTON

The sound of Musiq Soulchild is in the air. The diminutive soul singer, born Taalib Johnson, is leaning against a pool table in the lounge of the Philadelphia recording complex known as The Studio and singing along to "You Gonna Be Alright," a song from his debut CD, *Aj Juswanasing*. He has just changed his strategy for the vocal line, and he's sharing his ideas with producer James Poyser. "On the first tracks we did, I was really going after emotions, singing hard all the time," says the 23-year-old.

Musiq knows studio wizard Poyser can smooth everything out, but he scoffs at the time-honored practice of overdubbing. "I'm not into piecing the vocals together," he says. "I want it to flow like a live performance."

Like his idols Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, the singer—first heard on the Nutty Professor II soundtrack's "Just Friends (Sunny)"—doesn't overthink his approach. "It's an experiment every time I get in the studio," he says. "I actually have trouble singing the same way twice."

Musiq spent years living couch-to-couch, "doing the starving-artist thing," honing his musical style. He first worked as a human beat box for some local Philly rappers (who gave him his moniker as a sign of respect), then sang with the members of No Question at the city's Gallery shopping mall. Eventually, his smoldering, anguished phrasing and wide range of expression drew comparisons to such restrained masters as Donny Hathaway. But others hear D'Angelo, and that's all right with Musiq: "You hear D'Angelo and you say, 'What did he just do?' Even his nuances got nuances."

*Aj Juswanasing* is due out any day this month, and Musiq is ready to put his own stamp on soul music by restoring what he says are its basic values: good singing, memorable melodies, and a sense of spontaneity. "I'm all about just rolling and seeing what comes out of it," he says of his style. "I want to take music back to the raw essence of creation."

Tom Moon

JOY ENRIQUEZ *Bundle of joy* PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY DAIRAN

had a normal life," says Joy Enriquez. "I went to high school and sang at weddings and funerals." Life isn't so normal for Enriquez anymore. Last August, the Mexican-American pop singer from the Quaker town of Whittier, Calif., sang to 88,000 football fans at Azteca Stadium in Mexico City (with 8 million more people watching on TV). She performed her debut single, "Tell Me How You Feel," before the Pittsburgh Steelers and Indianapolis Colts strapped on their helmets. Honey dip was a vision of loveliness, dressed in pink lamé pants, her mocha belly exposed beneath a hot-pink halter.

Fast-forward a few months. Enriquez, 20, has just finished shooting the video for "Tell Me How You Feel," in which she coyly flirts with the camera while hanging out in a suburban backyard, dancing among laundry left to dry in the sunlight. The video is an apt metaphor for her appeal: There's something clean-scrubbed about her, a giggle in her voice, a youthful energy in her movement.

Before Babyface signed Enriquez to Arista after a live audition, she used to sing background vocals for Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston. Her self-titled debut, which drops in February, is drenched in more gloss and gleam than Tom Cruise's grin. Despite the high-profile production (Babyface, Fred and Rodney Jerkins, and Soulshock and Karlin), Enriquez's Latin-flavored jams possess a down-to-earth appeal. "Shake Up the Party" sounds like a family barbecue—30 cousins getting down in the backyard, congas and all. "I get upset when I'm on the road and I call home and the family is having a barbecue without me," she says.

When Enriquez was 4, she told her mother she would sing all over the world some day. "Everything I've set out to do I've done," she says. "I wanted to be on *StarSearch*, and it happened. I wanted to work with Babyface, and I did that, too. Now I want to win a Grammy and have a No. 1 record. Hopefully it's meant to be."

*Dimitri Ehrlich*

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## SOUTH PARK MEXICAN

Tex Mex

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN CROSS

**W**hile pop music exploded with Latino artists last year, rap music barely made a spark. Instead of gaining superstar Latino rappers, the hip hop world lost one, with Big Punisher's untimely death. However, there are some skilled vetos making their presence known in the rap game. Check Carlos Coy, the 30-year-old Houston-born Chicano rapper known as South Park Mexican (named after the real Houston neighborhood, not the cartoon Colorado town).

The smoky, barrel-chested, laconic MC has become Texas's latest breakout rap star. A decade ago, Coy left behind his life hustling drugs on Houston's streets and began honing his craft as an MC—to avoid getting killed and because he found rap music to be “the most pure, uncut dope” he had to offer. The regional success of his fourth independent album, last year's *The 3rd Wish: To Rock the World*, which included the bumpy hit single “High So High,” garnered him a three-album deal with Universal Records last August after selling 300,000 copies.

SPM's first release from that deal, *The Purity Album*, is an eclectic, home-brewed compilation featuring a diverse crew of local artists (Rasheed, Pimpstress, Grimm) he has signed to his independent label, Dope House Records, which he launched in 1995. “I named my label Dope House because we shoot dope to people's ears and make them feel real good,” says the Mexican.

Whether national audiences cop *Purity* or any of Dope House's releases, Mexican insists he'll remain true to his roots. “I was born and raised in Houston, and I will continue to hang out with my same old friends and do my same old things,” he says. But Coy isn't, well, coy about his ambitions as a rapper and entrepreneur. “Rap, pop, R&B, country music...I want Dope House to be the whole enchilada.”

Craig D. Lindsey

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# NEXT

## ABSOLUTE

### Mack daddies

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROY ZIPSTEIN

In the Y2K, male R&B artists are flipping verses about babymama drama and wooing women with ice—not necessarily in an engagement-ring context either. “You don’t have a lot of lasting relationships in the ‘hood,” says Corey Green, 23, one half of the R&B duo Absolute. “We’re just speaking on that.” “We” are Green and his 22-year-old partner, Yero (pronounced Yah-roo) Brock. Their first single, “Is It Really Like That?” is a perfect example. Together, they’re putting a soulful spin on the harsh realities of many urban love affairs.

During an afternoon visit to the Gentlemen’s Club in Atlanta, the two discuss their debut album, *Absolute*: Corey & Yero, while several buck-naked strippers (rigG-strings required in the ATL) write nearby. The CD is the first release on Noontime Recordings, an Atlanta-based, Atlantic Records-distributed label. Initially the singers’ families were wary of the hit-or-miss nature of their chosen profession. “Then I got a deal,” says Green, who once considered becoming a registered nurse. “Yeah,” interjects Brock, “then they were like, ‘You better sing, boy!’”

The Noontime producers, who have cranked out hits for Toni Braxton, Aaliyah, and Jagged Edge, created *Absolute*’s album entirely in-house. The hip-hop-tinged production perfectly matches the album’s stories of gritty urban-love dramas. And these two vocally gifted charmers know of what they speak: Between them they have five children by three women.

The lush, unabashedly romantic “All for You” is “how a man feels in the beginning before she crosses you up,” Brock says while waving a \$20 at a passing dancer. “Catch 22” is a tale of getting caught out there with another woman—a scenario both fellas have experienced. “My son’s mom came to the studio, and I was with another friend,” recalls Green. “It was drama. But when I heard the track, I started writing the song right there.” And when they sing, “Just ‘cause we make love a time or two don’t mean I’m supposed to love you” on “That Don’t Make It,” you can’t help but appreciate their honesty, no matter how harsh it sounds. Coming from these sly hot boys, even that sentiment is seductive.

Erica Kennedy

Yero Brock (left) and Corey Green



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WHIP APPEAL: Ejiofor in a 2000 Jaguar XKR convertible

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# • a jy- z

## JAYHOVA'S WITNESS

Jay-Z went from writing rhymes in corner stores to balling in hundred-thousand-dollar rides. Now, as he awaits trial on assault charges, he's releasing one of his strongest albums yet and grooming a new generation of stars for success. Welcome to his dynasty.  
*By kris ex*

PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY VINCENT SKELTIS



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A few months later, *Reasonable Doubt's* release is pushed back, mainly because of the surprising gold-selling success of *The Nutty Professor* soundtrack's "Ain't No Nigga," Jay's duet with young rhyme upstart Foxy Brown. In an interview, he plugs the Mary J. Blige-assisted "Can't Knock the Hustle," the next single from his now eagerly anticipated debut album that gives a glimpse into his hustler's past. "You gotta realize that song was conceived at a time when hustling was my life," he admits. "That was a way of life, and rapping was a hustle. So I'm telling people in the street, 'Don't knock the hustle,' which is rap. Everyone was doing well on the streets. They see rappers as clowns, actually. 'You doing all that work while the record company gets all that money. I'm riding in Benzes; you getting in the cab.'"

In his music, Carter pulls no punches about his past. His releases have taken hip hop into a higher tax bracket (the video for 1995's "In My Lifetime" shows the rapper on a yacht) and deeper into the drug trade than ever before (in 1996's "Dead Presidents II," he vows vengeance for a friend riddled by bullets because of the pitfalls of the game). Beyond that, the nigga can put it in rhyme with class, skill, and wit. "My dough flip like tae kwon / Jay-Z the icon / Baby, you like Dom? / Maybe these Cristals'll change your life, huh?"

"I lived a different life than most rappers," Jay says. "I don't even write rhymes. I just think 'em. It's not freestyling 'cause I just put them together in my head. That comes from being in the streets so much, having to go in the corner store and maybe write down a line and then just memorize the whole shit. After a while you become accustomed to doing that. You memorize one line, then one verse, then whole songs."

No one knew the significance of transferring unwritten rhymes to wax at the time. But it didn't matter. Jay-Z wouldn't be around for long. This was to be his one and only album.

"After this, I'm gonna put out an EP and that's it," he promises. "At this moment, I consider myself a rapper/businessman. After the EP, I'm a straight businessman."

By fall of 1996, *Reasonable Doubt* is certified gold. Dash is still pushing the project hard. "We have the underground locked down, but we need to get to MTV," he says from behind his desk at Roc-A-Fella. "If you ask anyone who knows of Jay, they say he's the best rapper out there. But he's still only gold as opposed







FAMILY BUSINESS: Bessie, Jay, Black, and Amil

to other cats that's two- or three-times platinum. If we can get the commercial people to understand what he's talking about—the cats that don't go out in the streets, that just go to school, go home, and watch MTV. If we can get them to hear Jay then that'll bring us where we need to be."

But it doesn't seem possible. Jay-Z is just too raw. His lyrics are too vivid a depiction of the underworld, his scoffing at authorities too eloquent to be tolerated, and his caviar dreams too aspirational to reach outside his core audience of ballers and daydreamers. Jay-Z on MTV? It'll never happen.

**I**t's fall of 1997. Things done changed. Gold is out, platinum is in. And Jay-Z has ghostwritten rhymes for everyone from Lil' Kim to Bugs Bunny.

Jay-Z, who promised he'd retire from rap after making one album, is gearing up to release his sophomore effort, *In My Lifetime, Vol. 1*. He has gone back on his word for two reasons: one personal, one business. "There were cats coming up to me like, 'You must have been looking in my window or following my life. I could just feel in my veins the shit you was talking about,'" Jay says, his feet propped up on his desk. "It was emotional. Like big, rough hoodlum, hardrock, three-time jail bidders with scars and gold teeth just breaking down. It was something to look at, like, I must be going somewhere where people been wanting somebody to go for a while. And then it was business because we just entered a joint venture with Def Jam, and that was one of the stipulations in the contract, that I do two albums."

But after that final contractual obligation, Jay maintained that would *really* be it. He'd release a two-album set he'd call *Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*. He was the nexus of the Roc; a lot of people depended on him to eat. Besides, as he walked down the street or did everyday duties, the rhymes would just keep coming to him. "I guess I just got those subjects that I need to get out," he says. "All the shit that I seen, all the shit that I been through, it's just bottled up. And these are things you can't just run around talking to everybody about. So it's like therapy, like a release. Like, Aaahhh, I said it! There, it's over."

*Y'all niggas truly ain't ready for this Dynasty thing / You're thinking Blake Carrington; I'm*



*thinking more like Ming... / What y'all about to witness is big business, kid.*

—“4 Da Fam,” 2000

October, Y2G. The platinum thing has turned into an ice age of never-ending bling, bling, and more bling. Hip hop's top-selling act is a white kid with rap skills out the anal. Much of the Roc-A-Fella dream has been realized. Due in large part to the *Annie-*

sampling title track from his third LP, the quintuple-platinum *Vol. 2...Hard Knock Life*, Jay-Z has become a household name from Jamaica, Queens to Kingston, Jamaica. The Rocawear clothing line has clocked \$80 million in sales in less than two years of operation. Roc-A-Fella Films, in conjunction with Miramax, has already released *Backstage*, which chronicled 1999's sold-out, 54-show *Hard Knock Life* tour. *Paid in Full*, starring Mekhi Phifer, about two notorious New York drug lords, is currently filming in Toronto.

"Everything we said we was gonna do, we did," says Dash. "Five years ago, we knew we was gonna have a clothing company, we knew we was gonna sell records, and we knew we was gonna do movies. The only thing that's changed is now people have recognized and respected what we're doing as opposed to thinking it's ego."

Roc-A-Fella may very well fashion itself after the Ming Dynasty, which is also known as the "brilliant" Chinese dynasty. Lasting from 1368 to 1644, it established a government structure that thrived until 1912 and is noted for its artistic and economic achievements, especially its expansion into new territory. But even the Ming, who were overthrown from within and replaced by the Manchu, would tell you that success breeds stress.

"I never thought success would be so hard to manage," says Jay. He's in his suite at L.A.'s Four Seasons Hotel, sinking so deep into the couch that his Rocawear outfit is melting into the upholstery. After two days of video shooting, with another two to go, he's understandably tired. But he'll stay up all night to talk.

He may still retire. Or he may not. "I could make records as long as I have the desire to really dig deep and challenge myself to do it. I can do it for as long as I want," says Jay, sounding mad confident. "But if I don't ever have the urge to make another record, then I guess I'm retired."

He gives cordial answers to questions his rap persona would kill with a witty riposte: Yes, he did have a child on the way as he rapped on Amil's "4 Da Fam," he says but stops short of giving a reason that's no longer the case. No, he isn't romantically involved with R&B songbird Aaliyah. And he frankly discusses the way he felt when his father distanced himself from the family when Jay was in his early teens.

"I want you to imagine for a second growing

up looking like someone and wanting to walk like that person and everything like that. You look at that person like that's your goal in life, to emulate everything they do," he says. "And then your mom comes to you and be like, 'Well, we about to get a divorce. And your pop wants to disown you once you turn 18.'"

"To me, that was basically the end of our relationship," he continues. "That was when the hurt and then the healing began for me, from that day right there. I don't remember that feeling of missing him and wanting him around. It's like you been without something so long you just adapt to it. All those good feelings are reserved for my mom and my sisters and my nephew and the people that's close to me."

His conflicting emotions regarding his father are explored on "Daddy," from *The Dynasty*. "You know how you have something on your mind or something you ain't been saying the whole truth about?" Jay asks. "I remember me and Beans talking about this song, and he was like, 'I can't even write this. I just gotta go do this one. I got so much to say.' The ill thing about it is I was gonna make a song out of us just talking. The conversation about doing the song, to me, was better than the song." When Jay learned that R. Kelly, whom he greatly admires, also has issues with his father, he reached out to the R&B superstar. A short time later, Kelly laid vocals for the track.

It's songs like "Daddy" and *Vol. 1*'s "You Must Love Me"—five minutes of confession so personal that he had to get his family's

**"I'm gonna release seven singles," says Jay with his signature hubris. "Maybe 10. Watch me."**

permission to record it—that elevate Jay beyond MC par excellence to the people's champ. His words are candid and conversational, his themes universal, his exploration of the human condition on a level with Ralph Ellison. There are countless glimmers of vulnerability, bits of Eastern philosophy, and messages of self-reliance. When chronicling the high life, Jigga's real jewels lie just beneath the surface of his glamour and glitz.

"It's not a how-to book. It's not a book saying, 'You do this,' " Jay says. "It's like, 'Here are the things that I've experienced in my life. It's not all good. Know you can lose people within it.' I just give you the raw emotion of everything I went through."

Yet lines like "I just use rap to put shit in my name" paint Jay-Z as a larger-than-life überballer, flipping the bird to the authorities as he cruises around the ghetto in hundred-thousand-dollar rides. It's one of those mental images, like God as an old bearded white guy on a throne—it's just there, imbedded in your subconscious through suggestion, nuance, and association.

It's this mystery God image he ultimately combats as he awaits trial on assault charges stemming from the December 1, 1999 melee in Manhattan's Kit Kat Club, during which Untertainment chief Lance "Un" Rivera was stabbed in the stomach and shoulder (see "The Trial and Tribulations of S. Carter," page 136).

In the wake of his arrest, Jay became the butt of jokes on talk shows



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# The Trial and Tribulations of S. Carter

As Jay-Z's career continues to skyrocket, the lawsuit against him rages on. *By Joe Beard*

Jay-Z's hip hop high life could be headed for a cold interruption this spring when he goes to trial for allegedly knifing Entertainment Records chief Lance "Un" Rivera once in the stomach and once in the shoulder on December 1, 1999 during a record-release party for Q-Tip at Manhattan's Kit Kat Club.

The charges—attempted first-degree assault and second-degree assault—mean that Jay-Z faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine if convicted, according to Gloria Monteleone, public information officer for the office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau. At his arraignment earlier this year, Jay-Z pleaded not guilty to both charges.

Early reports said Jay-Z and Rivera apparently were squabbling over whether Rivera had produced bootleg copies of Jay-Z's then unreleased CD, *Vol. 3...Life and Times of S. Carter*. Jay says Rivera is a friend who loved his music—Un was particularly fond of "Streets Is Watchin'" and wanted to shoot the video for "Coming of Age (DA Sequel)." Says Rivera, "Me and Jay-Z have been friends, and we'll always be friends."

"It's like you and your friend bickering,"

says Jay-Z. "You know you're gonna speak to him again, regardless. A lot of things get blown out of proportion by newspapers."

"It was a ruckus," says Roc-A-Fella Records co-CEO Demon Dash, who accompanied Jay to the club that night. "If somebody has a fight and they're with you or around you, people tend to see it's you, whether it is or not. But no one in my camp is stupid, so we wouldn't jeopardize nothing—our freedom or our riches."

New York defense attorney Murray Richman claims that video footage shot at the time of the stabbing exonerates Jay-Z. But both prosecutors and presiding New York Supreme Court Judge Micki Scheerer were given the tape and continue to press on with the case.

Jay-Z, Richman, and defense co-counsel Robert Kalina went to court October 25 to set a trial date. But because Richman is busy defending clients in trials through the end of the year, it seems unlikely that Jay's case will go to trial before next March.

Richman is critical of the way prosecutors handle cases involving rappers. "Where hip hop is involved, you're guilty until proven innocent," he says. Richman maintains that Jay-Z

is not guilty of the assault. "Not only were we innocent before," he says, "we are still innocent."

While he awaits trial, the rapper is free on \$50,000 bail. Freedom requires responsibility, though, and after Jay-Z was an hour and a half late to his September 13 court appearance, Monteleone said he was "put on notice" that if he's late to future hearings he could face contempt of court charges.

Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Christopher Conroy is prosecuting Jay-Z's case and so far has not offered a reduced charge in return for a guilty plea. But even if he did, it seems unlikely that Jay would plead out.

"I'm not interested in an offer at this point," Richman says. "My client's not guilty. Nobody seems to get that through their head. I'm not posturing." Richman says the prosecutors have little physical evidence and no weapon to link his client to the assault on Rivera.

At one point, Rivera had been contemplating a civil lawsuit against Jay-Z related to his injuries, but the case has not been filed, Richman says. Thomas Puccio, Rivera's attorney, did not return phone calls.

and on the streets. Though his lawyers have suggested that he not speak about the case, as his trial is still pending, Jay says none of the taunting affects him as much as the way he feels he's being singled out by the justice system. "I feel that if I was any other person it wouldn't still be dragging on for this long," he says. "It's like, 'I'm not gonna treat this person special because he's a rap star.' So in order for them, in their mind, to keep the scale balanced, they treat you worse. They don't treat you like a regular nigga. If you didn't act like a normal person then they'd be like, 'This guy, he thinks he's special.' It's weird, man. It's a lot to deal with."

For all his openness on wax and off, Jay is still an intensely private and contemplative

fellow who fancies himself a deep thinker. His conversation is filled with pregnant pauses. "I'm not gonna fight the laws of power, man," he says, measuring every word as he speaks. "Everything happens for a reason. It's another learning experience for me. What don't kill you can only make you stronger. And right now, with this album right here, I feel like I'm at the strongest point when I shouldn't be. This is the point where anyone else would start declining."

Jay-Z's ascension is even more striking because he has never had a formula. He has never relied on a particular sound or producer to make hits. For each of his albums, he used a different assortment of beat makers, both established and unproven. Even his most

frequent collaborators—DJ Premier, Swizz Beatz, Timbaland—are nowhere to be found on *The Dynasty*.

"I'm a producer in my own right," says Jay. "With every album I have ideas, and I look for tracks to match those ideas. I really don't believe that it's the producer, it's the music. I have the movie. I just need the music, and when I find the music that fits the mood, I get the track. It could be from anybody."

"People keep taking my words lightly," Jay continues. "I've already achieved success. My big challenge is for the new generation to get their fair share, to come from out of the Jay-Z umbrella and just be Beanie Sigel, just be Bleek, just be Amil. 'Dynasty' is a big word. That's how you gotta shoot for it." □



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# ONE IN AMILLION

Jay-Z's beautiful protégée finds a higher, more spiritual path and comes into her own with the release of her debut, *A.M.I.L.: (All Money Is Legal)*.  
Hey, you can't knock the hustle. *By Andréa Duncan*

Even in a noisy Italian restaurant near her home in suburban New Jersey, Amil Kahala Whitehead, 27, attracts attention. Middle-aged white men in business suits can't help but steal glances at hip hop's latest flavor making her way across the room. Amil, with her killer cheekbones, flawless skin, and air of confident nonchalance, looks every bit the star she's set to become.

After being handpicked by Jay-Z to appear on his 1998 summer anthem "Can I Get A..." and landing a deal with his Roc-A-Fella Records that same year, Amil's career took off. Her breathy voice and Gucci-referencing lyrics popped up on many Jay-Z hits, including this year's "Throw Ya Hands Up" and "Hey Papi." She toured with the Hard Knock Life show, was featured in a Sprite commercial, appeared in Beanie Sigel's straight-to-video film *Get Up or Lay Down*, guested on LL Cool J's *G.O.A.T.*, recorded her debut, *A.M.I.L.: (All Money Is Legal)*—a surprisingly diverse and thoughtful collection of tracks—and started her own label, Major Coins. All within two years.

"Jay just put this career in my hands," she says with a raise of her perfectly arched eyebrows. "I went from having nothing at all to wearing diamonds." And though she's living her childhood dream, she's also subject to petty gossip and pressure to prove she's not Jigga's

puppet. "People have so much to say about me. They think Jay writes all my rhymes, they don't think my hair is real, and the latest rumor," she says, giggling: "I'm pregnant with a married man's baby."

The pregnancy rumor popped up last summer when her tiny waist started to thicken. "I just put on weight," Amil says. "Plus, I want to have more kids. If it were true I'd be like, 'Yeah, I'm pregnant, what?'" And to those who think rap's most famous ghostwriter pens her rhymes, she says, "Then you must think I'm a good writer." Though Jay has written most of the cameos we've heard from Amil thus far, she alone is responsible for the bulk of her album. "She surprised me," says Jay-Z. "Her album is gonna be the surprise of the year because she has a talent for song-making."

She certainly has enough material to draw from. Born to a black father and white mother, Amil was abandoned at an early age and adopted by an aunt she considers her real mother. "When my mother passed in '94, I was like, it's over for me. She was the one person I had to run to." A year after her adopted mother died, Kendall Morgan Sr., her boyfriend and the father of her 8-year-old son, Pape, was stabbed to death. Looking back on her years as a young single mom in the 'hood, Amil admits to doing "a lot of things I wish I hadn't done," including depending on welfare and

not-so-dependable men and hustling small-time drugs.

Now she says she's finally in control of her life. She quit smoking weed a year ago, ended an unhealthy relationship (she's now involved with Wu-Tang affiliate Killah Priest), and is in the process of spiritually "bettering herself." She's a practicing Hebrew Israelite (a somewhat obscure religious sect that believes people of African descent are the true Jews) and can be seen sporting a Star of David around her neck. She prefers staying at home to partying and still packs her son's lunch every morning. "What I want most in life is to concentrate on family," Amil says wistfully. "I'd like to buy a house, get married, and move down South where the pace is slower."

To those who may find her down-to-earth personality in conflict with her onstage gold-digger persona, Roc-A-Fella's first lady says she tried to balance the two on her current album. "Yeah, there's songs about flossin' and stuff, but there's also 'Quarrels,' a song that says Satan is the root of all the ballin' and hustlin'." She says she avoids explicit sexual references on her album and next time she'll shun cursing altogether. It's not easy being a hip hop supermom on the path to enlightenment. "I know I sin," Amil says rather wearily, "but I'm trying to become a better person." And, for the record, her hair is real. ☐





# O

# UT KAST

## SCENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Can you smell what the rap's got cookin'? **OutKast** are back up in there one mo' 'gain. How do you follow a classic album? How do you create something truly different? Just follow your nose; it always knows. *By David Bry*

Photographs by **SACHA WALDMAN**

New York City is at its absolute New York Cityest. Traffic has the taxi drivers leaning on their horns, cursing in every language known to man. The sidewalks are bustling, thick with everyday pedestrians, late-summer tourists, and more large men in black suits with little wires coming out of their ears, probably, than have ever before been amassed in a 23.7-square-mile area. It's Wednesday, September 6, the night before the 2000 MTV *Video Music Awards* are to be held at Radio City Music Hall—an event that happens to coincide with the United Nations Millennium Summit. The top-selling stars of the \$40 billion music industry are sharing the island of Manhattan with the political leaders of more than 150 nations. Everyone's waiting for the Eminem-meets-Yassir Arafat photo op.

Around midnight, in the dimly lit confines of Nobu—the exclusive Japanese restaurant co-owned by Robert De Niro—photo ops abound. Ryan Phillippe and Reese Witherspoon, Hollywood's blondest young married couple, occupy a table in the corner. Toward

pliment and express their own enthusiasm about the suggested collaboration. But throughout the evening, they seem pretty unfazed by the goings on around them, and they have the right to be. OutKast could step into the studio with just about anyone. And, chances are, they'd steal the session. Big Boi and Dre are at the top of their game right now, transcending hip hop, operating with a fearless sense of experimentation and adventure.

"I dig freeness," says Dre in the back of a limo heading uptown. (Nobu, it's on to Macy Gray's birthday party at Spa, then to D'Angelo's celebration at Centro-Fly with his Best Male Video nomination.) "Most of the artists I really love—from Jimi Hendrix to Prince to Parliament-Funkadelic to Sly Stone—blew my mind with the freeness. That's what I wanna do for people. There's not too many mindblowers out right now."

Minds are being blown, categories defied and redefined. While *Aguemini* pushed hip hop into unfamiliar terrain—the harmonica solo in the middle of "Rosa Parks," for example, or the sprawling, almost nine-minute testimonial,

Having just finished his part of a photo shoot downstairs in Milk Studios, Dre leans against the ledge and looks out at the cloud-streaked sky. Last night, at the taping of the BET Harlem Block Party, he ran into his ex-girlfriend, the mother of his 3-year-old son, Seven.

"Me and Erykah [Badu] have a friendship," he says. "A father-mother type thing. We speak; it's not like an 'I hate her/'I hate him' type of thing. It's real cool. Seven stays with Erykah for the most. But he's back and forth, like he'll stay in Atlanta with me for two weeks and then he's back with his mom. He's a traveling kid."

*Stankonia*'s second single, "Ms. Jackson," is an open letter dedicated to "all the baby's mamas' mamas..." It's emotional. And emotionally complex.

"I was trying to pose the question," says Dre, scratching lines into the cement with a pebble. "What would your baby's mom, what would *her* mom, think of you after things didn't go well between you and the female—after you've had a child and everything. Saying, 'Sorry, but I didn't mean to come into your daughter's life and damn near take a piece out

## "Some people feel like if it's not just a kick and a snare and the same one-two beat, that's not hip hop. That's boring."

the back of the room, documentary filmmaker Michael Moore dines with Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello. At a circular table up front by the door, surrounded by managers, lawyers, and label executives, Rage's bearded, dreadlocked frontman, Zack de la Rocha, is introduced to a pair of artists he hopes to work with.

"I'm very critical about music," de la Rocha says earnestly. "At this point, we're getting calls every day about doing collaborations. Honestly, 99 percent of the calls I don't even consider, no disrespect to the other artists. We're just so busy all the time now. But you guys...I've been listening to a sampler of the new album, and, man, those *songs!*"

De la Rocha is speaking to Andre "Dre" Benjamin and Antwan "Big Boi" Patton, the two 25-year-old Georgia natives who comprise the rap duo OutKast. The songs de la Rocha so exuberantly refers to are from their fourth album, *Stankonia*, the anxiously anticipated follow-up to 1998's double-platinum masterpiece, *Aguemini*, which featured the Grammy-nominated single "Rosa Parks."

Dre and Big Boi return de la Rocha's com-

"Liberation"—*Stankonia* ventures even further out of the genre's settled state. It's awfully fun to listen to—and maybe a little risky commercially. But even if the rock 'n' rave electrocharge of "B.O.B." alienates a few listeners, or if the playful crooning of catchy melodies like "So Fresh, So Clean" and "I'll Call Before I Come" has hip hop purists questioning the duo's allegiance, OutKast trust that their progressive instincts will serve them in the end.

"There are people who feel like what we're doing is too far from hip hop," says Dre. "Some people feel like if it's not just a kick and a snare and the same one-two beat and a sample, then that's not hip hop. But, to me, that's boring, so I don't wanna do that. If that's your version, I mean, that's cool, but you ought to listen to everything. It'd make your music better."

From the roof of 450 West 15th Street in Manhattan, you can see everything: clear across the Hudson River into New Jersey, the Statue of Liberty due south, the twin towers of the World Financial Center, the tip of Staten Island. It's late afternoon, the Sunday after the video awards, and the city seems calm.

of her world. It wasn't planned like that. It wasn't planned to go sour."

By the time Dre's finished speaking, he has carved the letters L-O-V-E on the ledge in white quartz granite.

Big Boi climbs the stairs to the roof carrying a plastic plate of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and collard greens. He sets his lunch on the ledge next to Dre and starts in on it. A well-rolled blunt sits near his plate for dessert.

Dre doesn't partake. He's a strict vegetarian, and he swore off drugs and alcohol five years ago. Due to the pair's differences in lifestyle (they travel in separate vehicles, for example, because Big Boi likes to smoke en route to *everywhere*) and fashion choices (Dre usually looks like some kind of psychedelic superhero, while Big Boi stays in jeans, fatigues, and T-shirts), rumors have cropped up at times that OutKast might be less friends than business partners.

"We hang out all the time," says Big Boi, glad to dispel any misconception. "It ain't like this is a job, like, 'Time to make the doughnuts,

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we gotta go make this music.' We live this every day. We go to the clubs, we go to the shops. Just two buddies hanging out. Two homeboys that's been knowing each other for, like, more than 10 years now."

Dre says: "People were saying those things because we're so extreme. They were wondering, How can they be so together and so totally different at the same time?"

Big Boi and Dre met in the 10th grade when they were both new students at Tri-Cities High School in East Point, Atlanta. After they started rapping together, a friend named Bianca told them about an aspiring producer she knew

from her job at a beauty-supply shop. Big Boi and Dre went to meet Rico Wade at the store and rhymed over an instrumental tape of A Tribe Called Quest's "Scenario" (played out of a truck that belonged to Big Gipp of the Goodie Mob). "They [rhymed] back-to-back for, like, eight minutes," says Wade. "I was like, Damn! These niggas ain't even breathing!" Wade invited them to the basement studio he'd built in his mom's house—a.k.a. The Dungeon—and a family was born.

"We'd just make music," says Dre of the early days with Goodie, Wade, and the Organized Noize Productions crew. "All day, every day."

OutKast signed to LaFace Records in 1993, and their first two records—1994's *The Chronic*-influenced pimp strut, *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik*, and '96's extraterrestrial thought piece, *ATLiens*—sold more than one million copies each. Now, following the bonanza *Aquemini* brought, Dre and Big Boi are diversifying their portfolio, so to speak. Already up and running or in the planning stages are an OutKast clothing line, Aquemini Records (the label debut, Slimm Calhoun's *The Skinny*, is set for release this month), and a production company, Earthtone 3, that has already provided tracks for Mystikal and Cherokee.

Perhaps the most important professional development for OutKast recently, though, occurred in February 1999, when they bought their own recording studio, a two-story building in midtown Atlanta that they've dubbed (you guessed it) Stankonia.

"It's a sentimental place for us," says Big Boi. "Because that's where we recorded our first vocals—on TLC's 'What About Your Friends' remix. That was, like, 1992 [when it was called Boss Town studios]. It used to be Bobby Brown's, and we used to call down there trying to talk to him. We recorded a lot of our first album in that studio, when we were first starting out, when we was hungry. So the vibes...a lot of those experiences are in there, and they're coming through good."

Dre: "The ghost of Bobby Brown."

Big Boi: "Hell, yeah."

Dre: "He's a wild boy, so you know you're going to get some wild shit up in there."

Big Boi: "Hey, I wanna do a song with that nigga too, man. 'The Ghost of Bobby Brown.' We need to do that shit, folk."

Dre: "'The Ghost of Bobby Brown.' That'd be fire."

Big Boi: "That'd be hard as hell."

Like other ATL producers, OutKast have created a space for themselves to develop their own sound. Wade has The Dungeon (since relocated to the basement of the mansion he bought in southwest Atlanta), Dallas Austin, D.A.R.P. Studios, and Jermaine Dupri, SoSo Def Recordings. "Having our own studio lets us experiment more since we don't have to worry about paying for time," says Dre. "You can sit there and fuck with just a kick and a snare all day long if you want to. You don't have anyone coming down and saying, 'You have to leave the studio because so-and-so is coming in.' You're not working on the clock. Really, you're just working on your mind." ❑



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 CME brings together music-industry players from around the world to participate in a series of conferences, panels, live concerts, and a trade fair. The CME conference will be held at the Renaissance Jamaica Grande, featuring Wyclef Jean as a speaker and performer. For more information, log on to [www.cme.com.jm](http://www.cme.com.jm).

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# The Last Temptation

***Ja Rule's sophomore album, Rule: 3:36, reveals the battle between divinity and evil that exists in his mind. Hyun Kim attempts to find out which side is winning.***

Holding a cup of tea in his left hand and a tissue in his right, Jeffrey "Ja Rule" Atkins, 24, lies sprawled on a couch in Manhattan's Right Track Recording studios. It's Sunday afternoon, and he's the opposite of his energetic on-screen persona. Nursing a mild cold, Ja is tired, and the last place he wants to be is in the recording booth. He blames his illness on last night's flight from L.A., where he's been shooting *Redline*, a feature film about street race cars starring Vin Diesel. While half asleep Saturday night, he was shuttled to N.Y.C.'s Apollo Theatre direct from the airport for a taping of

BET's Block Party, where he performed his new hit, "Between Me & You." Ja finally reached his home in West Orange, N.J.—where he lives with his girlfriend, Aisha, and their two kids, Britney, 5, and 4-month-old Jeffrey Jr.—at 1 a.m. the next day. Come Monday morning, it's back to L.A. To make matters worse, his hectic schedule has forced him to delay surgery on his right foot to remove a cyst that developed after a freak jet-skiing accident a month ago.

"We gotta mix 'Extasy' after this!" booms Irv Gotti as he walks through the massive wooden door. He's referring to a possible track

on Ja's second album, *Rule: 3:36*. "C'mon, man, let's do it!" Unfazed by the barks coming from Murder Inc.'s CEO, Ja groggily rubs his face. "I want everybody to know that Ja Rule is a fucking horse," he says. "I work."

He'll hole up in the studio for the next 12 hours recording "clean" versions of two tracks. Initially, Ja had employed samples of songs by Stevie Wonder (on "Do I Do," featuring Case) and Barry White (on the drug-praising "Extasy," featuring Jayo Felony, Ty Murder, and Black Child). But Wonder didn't approve of his original composition being used as a



backdrop for what he felt were Ja's misogynist lyrics, and White was opposed to his perceived pro-drug message. Ja understands their objections but still feels slighted, especially since the primary artists end up owning 100 percent of the publishing rights. Ja says, "It's an ill thing for an older black artist to know the struggles we came from and then deny me clearance of something that could be my next hit record." Both Wonder and White declined comment.

Today marks the only day the Queens, N.Y., native has spent in New York recording *Rule*: 3:36. In order to avoid the Big Apple's "negative energy," Ja spent four months making the album in a West Hollywood mansion. "New York radio wasn't showing me no love," says Ja, whose single "How Many Wanna," from the *Light It Up* soundtrack, received heavy rotation in the West. "When you make records, it's like a presidential campaign. You can win in some states; you could lose in others. In Cali, I was winning."

The change of environment encouraged a shift in Ja's approach to writing lyrics. All the words to his 1999 platinum-plus debut, *Venni Vetti Vecci*, were written on paper. For *Rule*: 3:36, he let the beats communicate with him while he freestyled. "I just vibed with the music and wrote the rhymes in my head," he says. "The pen and the pad is the middleman, and that takes away my passion for my music because I'm relying on something else."

Ja's talents as an MC and songwriter have been questioned since he ripped his spotlight-grabbing verse on Jay-Z's 1998 hit "Can I Get A..." featuring Amil. Many called him a DMX/Tupac clone. Some say he got lucky with "Holla Holla." The doubters claim he can't do it again. "That's all good because nobody believed Noah either when he said the rain was coming, nigga," Ja says. Their lack of faith inspired him to title his album *Rule*: 3:36, which refers to a severely modified version of the New Testament's John 3:16: "He who believes in Ja shall have everlasting love. He who does not shall not see life but the wrath of my vengeance."

Judging by the amount of work he's been getting lately, there are plenty of people who believe in Ja Rule. He currently appears in two films, *Turn It Up*, with Pras, and *Backstage*, with Jay-Z and DMX. Between making albums, he modeled for a nationwide Calvin Klein Jeans ad campaign. And he hasn't slowed down since: Ja has already begun working on his third album, *Pain Is Love*, a double-CD set. He



believes all his hard work will pay off. "If you feel like you're number one, be scared," he says. "I'm coming to get you."

It's easy to dismiss Ja's confidence as arrogance, but up close he comes off more like a man struggling to find his place. On one hand, he's deeply spiritual and wears two crosses on his necklace, "one for the body and one for the soul." He has always rapped about God, and *Rule*: 3:36's "One of Us" (which has nothing to do with the Prince song) explores the possibility of God being, well, one of us. But on the other hand, this man—who was a Jehovah's Witness for the first half of his life and later dabbled in Catholicism and Islam—raps of killing men, sexing women, and the joys of the drug ecstasy. The heavy mixture of hedonism and spirituality screams hypocrisy.

"We're all human living on this earth," he

explains. "We're not heavenly souls and spirits that can live perfectly. I'm not a spiritual leader; I just believe in God." As he did during his youthful days as a Jehovah's Witness, Ja wants to go knocking door-to-door to bring his message. "You gotta feed the feeble," he says. "They're starving. They're the majority. You can't spread the message out there to the kids without showing them that you're with them."

A recent encounter with a fan helped Ja realize the power of his music. "I'm in Compton, and one of the homies comes up to me and says, 'I just want to thank you. We played 'My Race Against Time' [from *Venni Vetti Vecci*] at my little homey's funeral.' That fucked me up. I'm doing what I really wanted to do. Besides the record sales, videos, and all that other bullshit, I'm really touching people." □



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# SOUNDBOY



(Opposite page, left to right) Wyclef gets the party started the night after Fully Loaded; Mighty Crown searches for a beat; More fire! The crowd sets it off; DJ Khaled takes a break after nearly winning the night; (below) author's personal dubplate. (This page, left to right) Alaska Sound System; Spragga Benz gets wet and wild



# BURIAL

Winning a **dubplate battle** can make a selector's reputation overnight, and it all hinges on having the strongest platter. *Rob Kenner* shows how far some DJs will go to reign supreme.

**S** torm winds are bending the palm trees under a bruise-colored sky at Fort Clarence Beach, seven miles of narrow road outside Kingston, Jamaica. Military police with black helmets and M16s have taken up positions along the final sandy stretch, reminding the steady stream of incoming motorists who runs things. After months of hype and preparation, judgment day has arrived. Tonight's Fully Loaded, the ultimate sound clash of the year, where selectors (DJs) battle for bragging rights in the never-ending skirmish that is the international sound-system scene.

Thousands of hardcore dancehall fanatics are on their way, and a very important shipment of metal has just arrived: the Refugee Assassins' top-secret dubplate box. Wyclef Jean is here to prove once and for all that he and his camp can hang with the best. Like the other eight sound systems (DJ crews) in tonight's clash, the Assassins' survival depends on a few basic factors: their selector must display the cunning of a chess master; their DJ (MC) must pepper the performance with spicy slang to

keep the crowd hyped up; and, most importantly, they must have "music like dirt." Mere vinyl won't do. If you're not cutting your own dubs, you're not playing *nuttin'*.

**T**he big tunes, the only ones that matter, are strictly dubplates, custom-cut iron discs coated with acetate and sprinkled with stardust. In a world of mass-produced compact discs and endlessly duplicated MP3 files, a personalized 10-inch dubplate special—a one-of-a-kind recording on which an established artist performs over a popular rhythm—separates a champion sound from a part-time sucker. Sound systems will play these dubs anywhere they can be heard in order to build hype around themselves, but sound clashes like Fully Loaded are the ultimate test. The most extravagant dubs are voiced for one night only, with the featured artist calling out the opponent and venue by name to win a psychological edge, like musical ego missiles with bass-propelled booster rockets.

Before dancehall warriors enter battle, they're prepared to go to almost any length to obtain the right musical ammunition.

Dancehall veteran Tony Rebel has seen it all: Selectors will beg or use brute force to get a hot dub. One night back in 1992, Rebel and a rising star named Buju Banton were in a studio in England voicing some specials for a local sound system. The engineer played riddim after hot riddim, and the artists sang special versions of hit songs, laced with lyrics bigging up the sound's selector, owner, and posse—and, of course, dissing the competition. As they were leaving, a member of a rival sound showed up with a white-handled pistol in his belt. "Wow," said Rebel, playing it cool, "your gun look good." The disgruntled soundman pointed it at the artists and then squeezed off a shot in the air. "They said, 'All we want is some dub,'" Rebel recalls with a laugh that comes easier eight years after the fact. "We went back to the studio because we realized these guys were serious."

The powerful allure of these exclusive discs is deeply rooted in the culture of Jamaican dancehall. Since the 1950s, a hot night out in Kingston involved dressing up to dance till dawn at an outdoor lawn party where a mobile sound system had strung up the big hi-fi. The best jazz, R&B, and Latin records were jeal-

PREVIOUS SPREAD: STILL LIFE BY JENS MORTENSEN; EVENT PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMA



ously guarded treasures, their labels and serial numbers scratched off to frustrate spies from rival sets, stockpiled like ballistic missiles in a musical arms race. Over the years, the trend spread wherever Jamaicans and those who love their culture gather: Brooklyn, Miami, Tokyo, and the whole of England, where dubplates fueled the jungle scene.

Until the release of Wyclef Jean's new album, *The Edeftic*—which features dubs from Whitney Houston and Kenny Rogers in combination with Pharoahe Monch—dubplates remained a mostly underground phenomenon. "Me being from the Caribbean, I grew up on all of that," Jean said a year ago at the Caribbean Music Expo in Ocho Rios, the first time he brought the Refugee sound system to Jamaica. "I been into sound tapes since I was, like, 15 years old—Killamianjaro, Stone Love, all the early sounds. It's a deep culture, and hip hop should start getting into it."

**A**t least 15,000 rude boys and bashment girls have jammed their way onto the beach as the night air crackles with lightning and blazing aerosol torches. The up-

## HOME DUBBING

These machines will help you make your very own dubplate  
(platinum recording artist not included)

There are a growing number of playback options and formats available to working disc jockeys: CDs, MP3s, computer hard drives, Shockwave streams, and MiniDiscs. However, true DJs give short shrift to these antiseptic technologies and never hesitate to get their hands dirty, ripping dust particles from slabs of black wax. Bridging the void between what's virtual and what's vinyl are *MixMachines Kingston Dubplate Cutter* and *Vestax's VRX-2000 Vinyl Recorder*. Both tools give you the power of your own home-based pressing plant.

Utilizing the ubiquitous Technics 1200 turntable as a platform, the Kingston accepts whatever sounds you feed it—including audio from those even more ubiquitous CDs, MP3s, Shockwave streams, etc.—through standard line inputs, then cuts up to 25 minutes of the final product onto custom-made S7 vinyl compound blanks tough enough to endure the heat of scratching (the Kingston can also cut acetates as well).

Vestax has been waging a quiet insurrection against the virtually impenetrable dominance of Technics for a number of years, notably through their PDX series of turntables. While details about their VRX-2000 are still sketchy, press photos show that it won't rely on the 1200 platform but instead will utilize its own custom-made turntable and a slightly different layout. The machines are similar in most other ways. Plus, with approximately \$5,000 price tags, these toys aren't for dilettantes but only those who are truly serious about destroying the competition with turntables. Let the battle begin.

Harry Allen

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and-coming sound Alaska has already rocked the crowd. Legendary King Addies sound, featuring Trinidadian selector Babyface, starts out slow, losing the crowd with a lengthy intro of celebrity voice-overs. Next up is DJ Khaled—a Palestinian kid from Miami whose "Arab Attack" (which features dancehall hits remixed on hip hop beats) has been making waves in the yard—and X amount of shots bust into the sky. The security forces aren't the only ones who came fully loaded tonight.

When the storm finally hits, it slams in with powerful winds and fat raindrops. The beach quickly turns to mud, with high-voltage cables snaking through ankle-deep puddles. Spragga Benz, the master of ceremonies, keeps the show moving despite the monsoon. "Line up the Refugee Camp ting," says Spragga, stripping off his soaked yellow tank top. "The man waan come perform inna the rain too. Jamaica alone dem ting gwan. All Jamaican people, clap uno self."

The Refugee sound system approaches the stage. A suitcase full of tunes is handcuffed to one man's wrist. Wyclef Jean prepares to drop the bomb. "When I first came to Jamaica to get these dubplates, there was a lot of politics going on," he explains. "I called Bounty Killer, he said, 'Maan, I'd like to do it for you, but I'm kinda busy right now.' I called up Capleton, he said, 'Maan, I'm gonna be in Detroit.' So hear what I went and did...."

The warm voice of Beres Hammond rings through the night—"I'm so tired, I'm so tired / Of the idiot confrontation...." This "Double Trouble" dub, which the crowd demands be played four times, sets a triumphant mood. Next up is a blazing new Baby Cham on the Sleng Teng riddim, which releases raw adrenaline and gunshots galore. By the time the Refugee Assassins get around to their Lil' Kim special ("No matter what people say / Refugees got it goin' on") and the Michael Jackson combination with Mad Cobra, 'Clef has won the night.

The next evening, Jean is celebrating his victory with a party at Kingston's Strawberry Hill hotel. He's still feeling last night's vibes, and he has brought along his dubs. "Tony Matherhorn better not show up," he says of the "mentally ill" mike master, who made it a point to dis 'Clef at the previous night's battle. But that rematch will have to wait until Reloaded, the big Christmastime clash.

Suddenly 'Clef stops the music. "The rumor in Jamaica right now is that this next tune is not really Michael Jackson," he says, his voice intense. "I'm working on Michael's next album, and he owes me \$60,000. I went to him and said, 'Michael, I'll knock it down to \$50,000 if you give me this dubplate. I'm going to Jamaica, and I need you to help me kill a soundboy.' Michael Jackson looked me dead in the face and said, 'I can't talk about murdering.' And I said, 'No, Michael Jackson, you stupid fool. I didn't tell you to kill anybody, dummy. I told you to kill a soundboy.'" Then Jean lets go the most expensive dub in history. Mad Cobra spits a toxic intro, and Jackson sings to the tune of "Human Nature": "Looking out in Jamaica / No one can touch Kingston city / The Refugee sound will kill a soundboy...."

Meanwhile in town, King Addies' Babyface sits on a wall across the street from Asylum nightclub. The place is packed, but he's just chilling tonight, replaying the battle in his mind. "It's pure politics a gwan," he says quietly. "I called Cham and Killer, but they never got back to me." He gets a piece of sugarcane from a street-side vendor, telling him, "Me soon pay you," then gets lost in his thoughts once more. "Wyclef come with Michael Jackson on dub. I would spend \$10,000 for a Michael Jackson if I could get it. Just wait till Reloaded." ■



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# RAISER

## **Limp Bizkit**

spearheaded a wildly successful movement in 1999 with their angst-filled rap 'n' rock tunes. And in the face of much criticism, these pro-Napster punks have become the voice of a generation.  
*By Marc Weingarten*

Illustration by THE DYNAMIC DUO STUDIO

"Next...Next...Next."

**F**red Durst is checking his voice mail in the executive conference room of his manager's office. Unlike most of us plebs, Limp Bizkit's Robespierre of rage doesn't have to lift a digit to eliminate unwanted calls; he just barks "next" and poof! Message erased. Finally, hearing something he likes—an aural mash note from a girl who has been dogging his calls for weeks but seems to be coming around—Durst yells "call back," and the nifty voice-mail doohickey does the deed. He puts his would-be conquest on speakerphone:

**Girl:** "I just think it's so cool that, you know, you're a famous guy and you drive around in your own car doing errands and stuff."

**Durst:** "You're making me blush."

**Girl:** "I don't know, I just think we have a lot of things we could talk about."

**Durst:** "Well, I've got a lot I want to tell you. Call me later, after my meetings. You can call me anytime you want, okay?"

Durst grins the grin of the triumphant; he's positively relishing this whole glorious life of his. But it's not all about the nooky. The previous evening, he and the rest of Limp Bizkit—guitarist Wes Borland, turntablist DJ Lethal, bassist Sam Rivers, and drummer John Otto—played the last date on their 20-city freebie tour. Sponsored by Napster, the Internet exchange service that lets users download copyrighted music free of charge, the tour was in support of the band's new album, *Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog-Flavored Water*. At a time when record labels would love to see Napster evaporate into the ether, Limp Bizkit have cannily co-opted its insurrectionary ethos. "Technology will never go away," says Durst. "Join it now or join it later."

Limp Bizkit's free tour was a brilliantly timed PR move. For months the group, whose previous two albums, *Three Dollar Bill, Y'all\$* and *Significant Other*, have together sold more than 6 million copies, has been a band under siege. Mercilessly blasted in the media as roughneck scofflaws with an unhealthy appetite for destruction, Limp Bizkit have embarked on a counteroffensive campaign, using their fervid fans as a bulwark against the onslaught. Before a baying crowd of 6,000 lunatics, Limp Bizkit stirred up a furious tempest of blood, sweat, and Budweiser at the

decrepit Grand Olympic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles, a merry band of knuckleheads rallying around their populist heroes. It was a performance Durst claims was "the best damn show we've ever had in L.A.," a fitting climax to an audacious experiment in participatory democracy that has turned Limp Bizkit into the anti-Metallica for the zit-popping set.

Durst refers to Limp Bizkit as "the world's most hated band" and is perplexed by all of the criticism being lobbed toward them like hand grenades. They seem to be getting flak from all sides: In the rock hemisphere of the pop-culture world, Limp Bizkit are regarded as signifying hooligans, opportunistic poseurs who are only in it for the moola, the moola. In the hip hop world, Limp Bizkit are condemned as cultural



poachers appropriating black style and attitude to pawn off on white listeners. To Durst—a self-described "white nigga" from North Carolina who spent a brief time as a Navy man and then a tattoo artist until he found his true calling as rock-hop's Wordy Rappinghood—it all comes down to cultural separatism.

"We didn't think we were gonna come in and be disliked by critics for being this band," says Durst. "You know, in the '30s they had blues and brass instruments and fuckin' Frank Sinatra. People were into all kinds of different music. Then the '80s come around, with hip hop and hair metal, and it was cool for everyone to like that. Now, there's something about rock and hip hop that just blends well. There's nothing wrong with it." The band has managed to find a few champions among hip hop's A-listers. "They're not a hip hop band; they're just trying to do things with a hip hop feel to it," says Swizz Beatz, who produced "Keep Rolling," a track

on *Chocolate Starfish* that also features Redman, Method Man, and DMX. "When they want to do hip hop, they call me and people like Method Man. It's all about not being in one corner and spreading your music around."

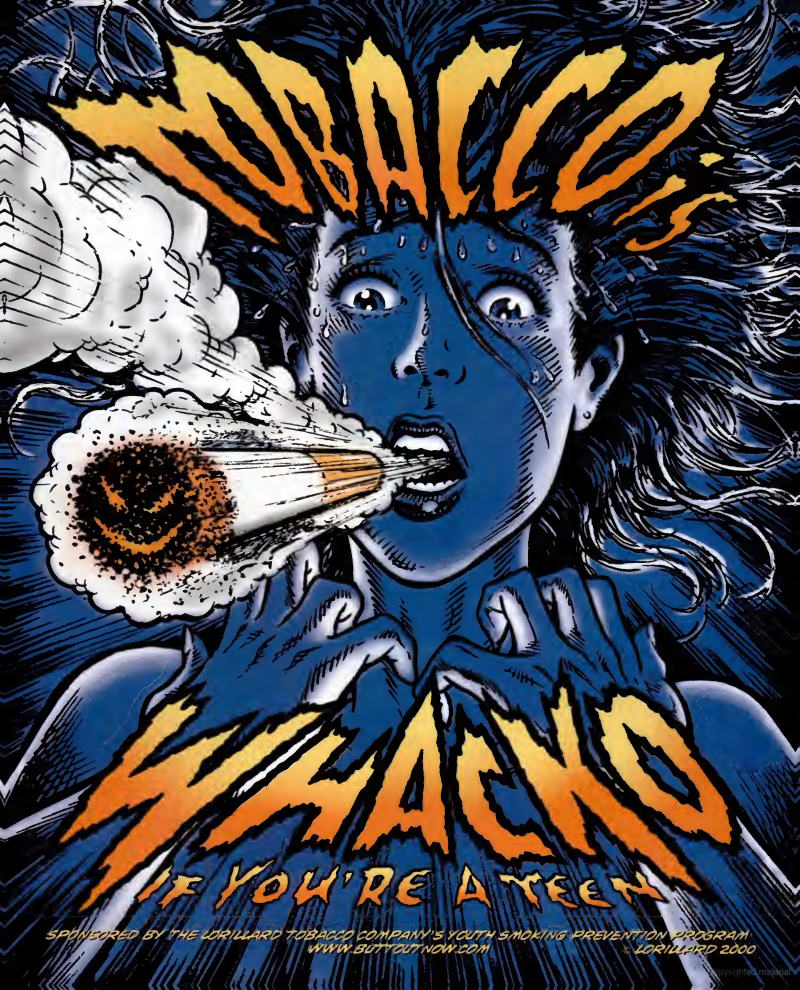
Tell that to Mos Def. On "Rock N Roll," a track from his latest album, *Black on Both Sides*, the New York-based rapper criticizes Limp Bizkit, along with icons like Elvis Presley and the Rolling Stones, for stealing black music to cash in with white fans. "Fred Durst is doing some Al Jolson shit," says Mos Def. "It's the equivalent of singing 'Mammy' to a rap beat. It's disrespectful."

"I'm glad that he even knows who we are, but I'm not stealing shit, dude," says Durst. "It sucks that he feels that way. I didn't ask to be the only white guy in my elementary and junior high school that hung out with black kids. People who live with boundary lines aren't gonna like me. I'm a guy that's never looked at lines that way. Mos Def is a dope rapper, though. He was just brought up thinking the way he thinks."

Talk to Durst about hip hop and black culture and it quickly becomes apparent he's a true believer. "When I was a kid, I was obsessed with the Jacksons and New Edition," says Durst. "And I used to think, Why does everybody hate me because I like black music?"

As an urban skateboarding punk, Durst, now 28, learned the lessons of the classic 1984 film *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* and became a break-dancing freak, which earned him entrée into the thriving black youth culture of his Gastonia, N.C., hometown—and the animus of white jateards. "I remember going to my friend Billy White's house in the 'hood, and they all knew me as Little Fred," recalls Durst, "because I loved to break-dance."

As if to prove his fealty to hip hop, he heads downstairs to a smaller conference room, the better to blast *Chocolate Starfish* through a fine pair of Tannoy speakers. The hip hop flavor is even more pronounced than on the band's previous two albums, as DJ Lethal's furious scratches ride the crest of Borland's fuzz-tone tsunamis and Durst barks out his badass B-boy manifestos like a rabid rottweiler. Sure, it's not pure, uncut hip hop, but who can blame a "white nigga" for trying? "I didn't mean for that to happen," says Durst. "I didn't say, 'I'm gonna steal that'; it's just a part of my life." □



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# Friday of night

If you only knew him from his lyrics and the media, you'd expect **Shyne**'s life to be about hustling, fast cars, and bling bling. *Lala Ogunnaike* reveals the human side of Bad Boy's latest—and most misunderstood—star.

*Photograph by Andrea Modica*



Shyne stands watch at the edge of the dance floor. It's Friday at his album-release party in a downtown Manhattan lounge aptly named Shine. A red St. Louis Cardinals baseball cap is pulled low over his impenetrable eyes. He is cool. He is expressionless. He is lanky and caramel-colored, nothing like the big black nasty-looking motherfucker you expect him to be.

An hour later, he has finished performing his hit single, "Bad Boyz." The crowd is more than satisfied, but he isn't. Shyne jumps back onstage bare-chested and does the song again. And again. The moment is vivid and surreal. Shyne is not cool. Shyne is not expressionless. He is the personification of unfabled passion, the epitome of a nigga high off his own shit. And tonight, he is free.

And no one can stop his shine, not even the rapper's boss, Bad Boy CEO Sean "Puffy" Combs, who attempts to cut Shyne's frenzied thank-you speech short. "I know I'm flipping,

The *Notorious B.I.M.*'s title track. (Don't look for a rebuttal. Shyne refuses to dignify the Queen Bee's swipe: "Me going back and forth with a woman? That's not gangster.")

Puffy says he signed Shyne on the strength of his rhyme skills, not because he sounded like Biggie. "That would be suicide for me," he says. "The structure of their flow is not the same. Biggie's Jordan. Shyne is Allen Iverson." With the confidence of someone who has owned his voice since birth, Shyne says, "I sound like me. There will never be another Biggie. I don't even understand when people try to compare us. That man had hit after hit. I've only got one album."

"Bad Boyz," the first single off Shyne's self-titled debut, is autumn's anthem club banger. The seductive amble of a track featuring reggae star Barrington Levy is the latest chart-topping jolt of Generation Y energy that Bad Boy has delivered this year following the successes of Bad Rabbit and Carl Thomas. There are few made-for-radio hooks, fewer samples, and no overt pop-flavored ditties on *Shyne*. The arresting beats are not only original but also highly

Barrow, a former deputy prime minister of Belize—dealt his son. When Shyne was only 15, he asked his estranged dad to help raise him. "He said he never wanted to have me," says the self-professed "bastard child." "He basically said he knocked my moms up. The nigga said his other two kids were made out of love. It was devastating. That shit really fucked me up."

It's not his only pain. His lawyers will not let him discuss the night of December 27, 1999 at Club NY in Manhattan. He's not allowed to talk about the shoot-out that left three people injured or the pistol found in his waistband. Or the possible 25 years in prison he could receive if convicted of attempted murder. So instead, Shyne talks about God and his underlying faith.

"God resurrected me in 1999," the rapper says, recalling 1998 as one of the worst years of his life. "I was a zombie in '98. Every time I went in the studio it was garbage. God was really whipping my ass." That same year, a car crash left a friend who was riding shotgun dead and his cousin Rondou, who now uses a wheelchair, seriously hurt. Miraculously, Shyne, the

## "There will never be another Biggie. That man had hit after hit. I've only got one album."

but fuck it," Shyne declares, as reverent stare wide-eyed and slack-jawed. "Cause, for real, I might not be here tomorrow."

It's odd that Shyne, born Jamal Barrow, 19, would speak of endings when his career is just taking off. His story reads like a hip-hop fairy tale. Young scrappy kid from the Flatbush section of Brooklyn is discovered while freestyling in a barbershop. A bidding war ensues. Sony, Def Jam, and Elektra court him. After much deliberation, Shyne, then 17, ultimately signs with team Bad Boy. "It was like Phil Jackson and Michael Jordan telling Kobe Bryant to come join the Bulls out of high school," the rapper recalls. (Contrary to reports, Shyne didn't sign for \$1 million. "I got regular signing money," he clarifies.) He is immediately conferred to "it" boy status.

But as soon as heads hear Shyne's smoke-cured baritone on Puffy's "PE2000" remix and Total's "Sitting Home," things take a turn for the worse. The rapper is denied as a cheap knockoff of The Notorious B.I.G. Lil' Kim leads the assault. "Everybody wanna shine off of Big, get it / Shyne, trying to sound like him when they rhyme," the pint-size pistol spits on

addictive—sure to make even the staunchest haters come around. Shyne bares all on "Dear America," the DMX-like confessional that kicks off the album. "Dear America, I'm only what you made me / Young, black, and fuckin' crazy / Please save me / I'm dying inside / Can't you see it in my eyes? / I'm hopeless / Fearless on the outside."

Much of *Shyne* travels a harsh and familiar trajectory—"I speak for the unheard niggas who love guns, money, girls, and furs," he rhymes on "Bang"—and the rapper stands firmly behind his lyrics. "The album is me up to the last song. No contamination. No water. That shit is straight Henrock." He talks of a youth spent in and out of courtrooms and detention homes, trips upstate and to the principal's office. He shows his war stripe—a six-inch scar that staggers from the crux of his left arm to the base of his collarbone. He was only 15 when he was shot "for doing some things" he refuses to disclose. The mangled flesh is his only visible scar, but from his guarded demeanor you sense there are other wounds, some far more painful than any shotgun blast.

Wounds like the blow Shyne's father—Dean

driver, walked away uninjured.

Convinced that a cleaner way of life would be the key to his salvation, the rapper rid himself of the demons—"fast cars, bitches, and jewelry"—that he believes nearly destroyed his life. Now he's a strict vegetarian, exercises religiously, and shuns alcohol and drugs. Not quite what one would expect from a street-bred rapper. But Shyne, a loner for much of his life, says he usually goes against the grain. "I'm weird. I was never cool. I've always been on some other shit. I refuse to conform to the status quo."

Three days later, while in Detroit on a countrywide promotional tour, Shyne is alone, stanning across the river to Canada at a hotel he once stayed in. The rapper is peaceful and contemplative, and when asked what his world would be like without freedom, he answers, "A terrible thing. I fucking love liberty. That's why I'm by myself all the time." And then, after what feels like a long and tortured silence, he muses, "You know, freedom is all in the mind. If your mind is free, then you will always be free." And your light will always shine. ☐



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# SOUL POWER

**Yolanda Adams** is on a mission from God to bring gospel music to the masses. *By Tom Terrell*

**W**hen Edwin Hawkins and the Northern California State Youth Choir dropped the single "Oh Happy Day" in 1969, they had no idea its canny blend of old-time religion and nouveau R&B pop would sell one million copies and invent a new genre: inspirational music. After decades of potent lamb-gathering tunes from the likes of Andraé Crouch, the Winans, Hezekiah Walker, and Kirk Franklin, inspirational music has flipped gospel's script and crossed over big time.

Thirty-one years after "Oh Happy Day," Yolanda Adams, a former schoolteacher from Houston, is leading the flock to the promised land with her massive gospel-urban contemporary radio crossover hit, "Open My Heart," and a platinum-bust, Grammy-nailing album, *Mountain High... Valley Low*. "I've never been traditional," Adams says of her modern gospel style, "but my solo projects have never been a departure from my roots either." Throw in her acclaimed gospel-to-pop history series, *Inside the Music*, on the Odyssey Network and a momentous fall tour with gospel legend Shirley Caesar, and we're talking *A Star Is Born*. "I just pray that Yolanda will let me wash her car and carry her luggage on tour," says friend and fellow Texan Kirk Franklin. "She's the illest singer in gospel."

Unlike Streisand's character Ester Hoffman, Yolanda Adams is no overnight pop diva on the verge of tripping out. A faithful, optimistic,

down-home, unpretentious, ingratiatingly humble 38-year-old gospel star with seven hit albums and a former-NFL player husband (Timothy Crawford Jr.), she taught second and third graders for several years while she sang with the Southeast Inspirational Choir. When she started leaving school early on Fridays and coming in late on Mondays because of shows, she decided it was time to hang up her chalk.

With her eighth album looming, she still has no delusions about who she is and why she's here. "When you're from the church, you get folks who aren't very happy for you because they felt it should have been them," says Adams. "They tell you, 'It's just your season.' What do you mean it's just my season? Don't be mad because this is something God gave me. Shirley Caesar has been in the business almost 31 years. That's a long season, boo!"

Produced by Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis and Keith Thomas (BeBe & CeCe Winans, Wynonna Judd) and executive-produced by Adams and Elektra Entertainment Chairman/CEO Sylvia Rhone, *Mountain High* seems destined to become Adams's season-transcending, career-defining breakthrough. From the earthy mix of New Orleans funky swing and biblical paraphrasing on "Time to Change" to the sanctified-spirit jump-up of "Already Alright," the album flows sweetly, one get-your-groove-on-in-the-name-of-Lord delight after another. Revelation time: Chile can sing up a storm.

Last September on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, Adams simply was a storm. Fog was wafting—albeit from a machine—when she took the stage to perform "Fragile Heart." Still as sculpture, dipped from head to toe in sleek, gunmetal gray, she stretched to her full 6-foot-2-inch height, leaned into the mike, and sighed a wistful melody. Time stopped. As she dug in (slurring syllables, slipping melisma, hi-lowing octaves), the whole room got lifted. Everyone was feeling her.

Adams's genius lies in the subtlety of her faith. She doesn't beat listeners over the head with Jesus like some of her contemporaries do, yet it's easy to appreciate her belief in God even if you don't share her faith. "You can't live right without a sense of knowing that something higher is doing all of this," she says. "Sylvia [Rhone] told me, 'It doesn't matter if we sell one or one million, I know this album is something special.' She's the most powerful woman in the record industry, and for her to have that much confidence in my project, I know God had delivered her to me."

As far as Adams is concerned, confidence, success, record sales—everything positive that has happened to her—are manifestations of her sincere belief in God. By the time you read this, *Mountain High* will be platinum-plus, and Adams will be hosting her first Christmas special and awaiting the birth of her first child (a daughter). Very inspirational, isn't it? □

# THE AFTERMATH

Six families scarred by alleged police brutality tell their side of the story and how their lives have been changed forever

*By Deirdre Hussey and Coco McPherson;*

*Photographs by Andrew Lichtenstein*

**They become detectives,** legal experts, community organizers, public speakers, watchdogs, and activists. Outrage, grief, and fear drive them. They use their own resources seeking justice for their loved ones, all the while praying that the violent death of their child, brother, sister, father, mother, or husband will be the last anyone will have to endure. They are the family members of the hundreds who die at the hands of the police each year, deaths they attribute to unjustified use of force. Some work to put the cop (or cops) in jail. Others want only to get him off the street. All are met with this sobering fact: Justice can have a very different face when the defendant is a policeman.

According to a study covering the last three years commissioned by New York City's Public Advocate's office, 83 percent of the city's cops with substantiated complaints against them have at least one prior Civilian Complaint Review Board allegation. More than 75 percent were merely

reprimanded with little more than a note in their personnel files. The study also found that officers with substantiated complaints were more likely to be promoted than disciplined. A *Detroit News* investigation showed a similar trend in that city: In the 40 fatal shootings committed by Detroit police officers between 1995 and 1999, 35 cops were exonerated and four were charged with misdemeanors. Only one was jailed.

And the number of citizen complaints may be underreported. According to a 1994 anticrime law, the U.S. Department of Justice is supposed to track complaints against police. But because Congress never approved funding for the program, the CCRB cites that local police departments are expected to voluntarily provide the statistics to the federal government.

On these pages, VIBE profiles the members of six families whose loved ones were killed by the police—and are fighting back.



### **Kadiatou Diallo, New York City**

When you meet Kadiatou Diallo, you're struck by her sober bearing and the measured gentleness of her voice. It doesn't matter that she has publicly told the story of her son's violent death a hundred times. Each word she uses to describe Amadou Diallo is loving, every detail weighed—as though the right combination might summon him back to life.

More than a year after her 22-year-old son was shot at 41 times and killed by four cops from the New York Police Department's Street Crime Unit, the story surrounding his death has only grown in significance. Diallo has motivated thousands of people to take to the streets in nonviolent protest. "The focus is on making sure a person will never again be approached with suspicion because of the color of

their skin or where they live," she says.

Yet her battle has done little to dull the pain of losing her child. "I will never be the same person I was before Amadou died," she says. Forced to become a public figure upon arriving in New York, Diallo barely knew the details of her son's death when she left her native Guinea. "When I first got the news, I was told he had died," she says. "The night before I got on the plane, I was told the cops were involved."

She and her husband have established the Amadou Diallo Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting racial healing and diminishing prejudice. "I don't want the only remembrance of Amadou to be his horrible death," she says. "Amadou's spirit touched so many people." Still, she says, "I don't know where I will find normal again."



### Joyce Huang, Queens, N.Y.

In 1996, Joyce Huang (right), her sister, Qing Lin (left), and several others were arrested during a peaceful sit-down at the Brooklyn DA's office. "We wanted a new grand jury and a new investigation," she says, referring to a grand jury's decision not to indict the police officer who shot and killed her brother. "It's amazing that when the police shoot someone, they prefer to put the family of the victim in jail instead of the cop."

Yong Xin Huang was a 16-year-old honor student in 1995 when an officer shot and killed him in a friend's backyard in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, mistaking his pellet gun for a firearm. "They would later say

my brother resisted arrest, but he was a shy boy who never fought with anybody," says Huang. Initial police reports say there was a struggle and the officer's gun accidentally discharged. The autopsy showed the bullet entering from behind the ear.

In 1996, the Huang family settled with the city for \$400,000. There was no criminal case. "When you sue the city, they pay according to what they think a victim is worth," says Joyce Huang. "They pay less, for instance, if he didn't have a job. They determine the value of someone who can't be replaced. And what you finally settle for is very little considering you will never see this person again."



### **Marciel Oregon, Houston**

Two years after Houston police killed his 22-year-old brother, Pedro Oregon Navarro, Marciel Oregon (with Pedro's son Daniel) simply says, "I don't understand." In July 1998, six cops—without a search warrant, acting on a tip that Pedro was dealing drugs—kicked down the door of the apartment he shared with his other brother, Rogelio. A shot was reportedly heard, and the officers, believing they'd been shot at, responded by firing a combined 33 times at Pedro. Twelve of the bullets hit him, nine in the back. It was later determined the initial shot the cops heard had come from an officer's gun. No drugs were found in the apartment or on Pedro's body.

None of the officers involved are facing charges. That doesn't surprise

Oregon family attorney Paul Nugent. "The Harris County DA's office is incapable of doing an independent investigation of the police department." Houston Immigration & Refugee Coalition activist Benito Juarez suggests that, with Rogelio's perjury indictment stemming from conflicting statements he made about knowing the police's informant, a message is being sent to anyone tempted to challenge the department. In addition, the March police-related death of Mexican national Jaime Santiago Cruz in Houston prompted the Mexican Consul General to publicly criticize the Houston DA for his handling of the cases.

While Rogelio's case proceeds, Oregon says, "I go to my brother's hearings, but I can't go inside the courthouse. I'm afraid I'd get too angry if I came face-to-face with the cops who killed him. I just wait outside."



### **Arnetta Grable, Detroit**

"After my son's death, my attorney advised me not to speak publicly because we did not have a police report," says Arnetta Grable (right, with daughter Arnetta Jr., 12) of the 1996 shooting of her son Lamar, 20, by Detroit police officer Eugene Brown. "The day after the first anniversary of his death, I started talking to whomever would listen, and I have not stopped."

Brown claims that when he approached Lamar on September 21, 1996, Lamar was carrying a gun. He says that Lamar ran from him then fired at him, the two eventually struggled, and Lamar was mortally wounded. Brown said he shot him only in the chest. But the county autopsy contradicts Brown's account, concluding that Lamar was shot

three times at close range in the chest, twice in the back, and three times in the arm. Nonetheless, the circumstances of the case led the Detroit Police Board of Review to rule for "justifiable homicide" that November.

Since the one-year anniversary of her son's death, Arnetta Grable has spurred an anti-police brutality movement that has garnered national attention and has uncovered allegations that Officer Brown was responsible for the deaths of two other men. Brown committed three shootings over the course of six years, leading to multiple lawsuits, including one brought by a fellow officer. Says Grable, "None of the families believed Brown's scenario of the deaths."

Grable refused a \$750,000 settlement offer. "All my efforts are to get him off the street before he kills again," she says.



### **Aládé Djehuti-Mes, Seaside, Calif.**

Charles Vaughn Sr. was a teacher, union organizer, community activist, and veteran. For more than 20 years, the 60-year-old had successfully managed his schizophrenia. On the morning of May 19, 1998, two county social workers arrived at Vaughn's apartment expressing concern that he wasn't taking his medication and was a threat to himself. He told them he was, in his own words, "okay." Seeking to commit him against his will, the social workers called police, and Vaughn fled to the roof carrying a metal corkscrew. An officer pursued, and when Vaughn moved toward him, two cops on the ground shot him four times.

"He no longer wanted county services, and that was reason enough to kill him," says Vaughn's son, Aládé Djehuti-Mes (a.k.a. Charles

Vaughn Jr.), who for the last two years has aggressively campaigned to change the way officials deal with the mentally ill.

During a 19-day hunger strike, Djehuti-Mes demanded that Monterey County officials establish new procedures for dealing with the mentally ill and fund an Emergency Response Team. He also fought for a Justice Department investigation into the incidents surrounding the death of his father and other local police-brutality victims. All of his demands were met, and while his father's killing was ruled justified by the Monterey DA's office, the federal investigation is still pending.

"My father gave me an understanding of responsibility, community, family, and love," says Djehuti-Mes. "He committed his life to his children, and it is necessary that he receives justice."



### Margarita and Anthony Rosario, Bronx, N.Y.

"I lost hope—what little hope I had left," says Margarita Rosario of U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White's decision earlier this year not to bring federal charges against the two cops who shot her son 14 times, killing him. "We hung on for five years, thinking something would come of it."

Anthony Rosario Jr., 18, his cousin Hilton Vega, 21, and a friend, Freddie Bonilla, 18, entered a Bronx apartment in early 1995 to find two detectives waiting for them. The residents of the apartment claimed they'd been robbed and that the robbers had threatened to return. The officers opened fire, mistakenly believing that a gun had been pulled by one of the men. Bonilla, the sole survivor, says that he, Rosario, and Vega had gone to the apartment to collect money owed to Vega, and

that his two friends were shot while lying facedown.

In March 1995, a Bronx grand jury voted not to indict the officers. That summer, the Civilian Complaint Review Board deemed the two detectives had used excessive and unnecessary force.

It has been a long battle for Rosario and her husband, Anthony. She has become one of the most outspoken leaders in the anti-police brutality movement, making weekly public appearances as well as reaching out to other parents who have lost children in police shootings. Rosario, who also helped found Parents Against Police Brutality, says a documentary film currently in production will cover details of the case not investigated and possibly covered up by officials. "It is hard for a mother to give up," she says. "It is hard to just let go."





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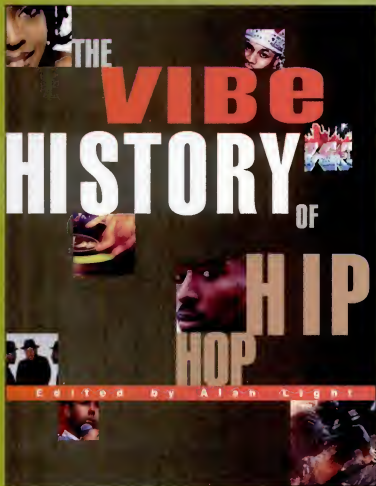
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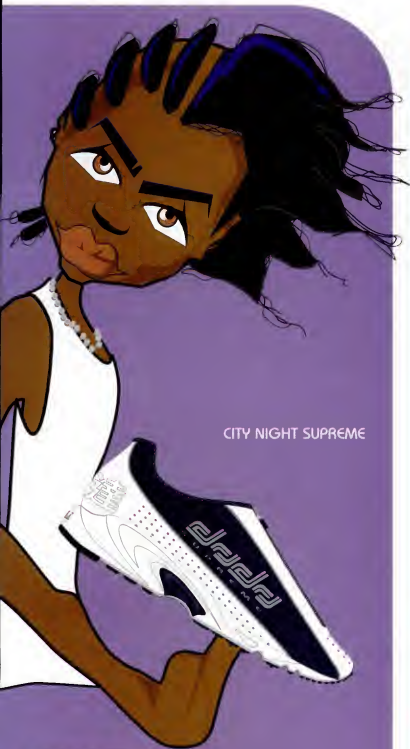
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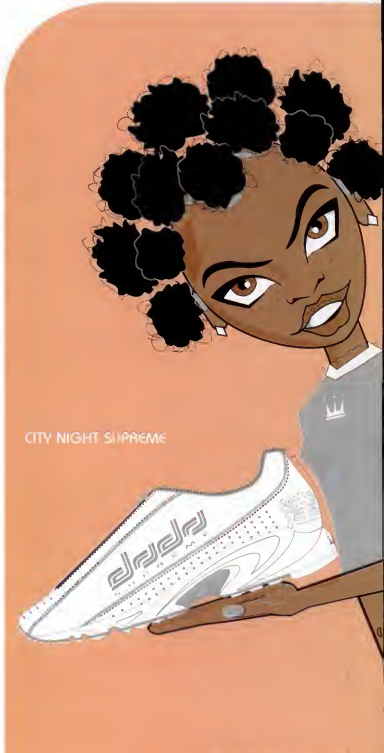
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# MR. BIG STUFF

Tough guy **Tiny Lister** gets soft on beautiful ladies—but *not* between the sheets, ya heard? *By Rebecca Louie*

**T**he earth shakes and mountains crumble when 6'5" Compton-raised Tom "Tiny" Lister enters a room. It may be the stampead running from *Friday* and *Next Friday's* big meanie Deebo or jingoists flooding the streets to glimpse the President of the Universe from *The Fifth Element*. Most likely, it's the mass of ladies swooning over the former pro wrestler who has 50 films under his belt and is about to let loose all hell this November playing the devil's son in New Line's *Little Nicky* with Adam Sandler. Taking a break from the bad-boy life to sit for a spell with VIBE, the spokesman for the black-owned Wittnauer Watches gives us the lowdown on his lovmaking style and the verdict on bigger as better.

**In *Little Nicky*, you get to play the son of the original OG. Li'l Lucifer himself. Ever get devilish in the sack?**

Well, everyone's got a little bad self behind closed doors!

**I guess all that training in the WWF taught you some good moves.**

Whoa! When I was in the World, I played Zeus. Women used to call me by name in bed, saying, "God! Ohhhhhh, God!"

**Sounds pretty heavenly. What kind of sex god are you?**

The god of kissing. I *love* to kiss. Women tell me I'm a good kisser, and if they're lying, I'm gonna get my bicycle and come get them!

**You did a lot of bicycling in *Friday* as the neighborhood bully Deebo chasing your boy Ice Cube. What was the deal growing up? Did you steal everyone's lunch money?**

I used to get pushed around all the time in elementary school! I would run home, and my mother would close the door and be like, "Get back out there and fight, boy!" But then I started drinking that milk and I got big. Then I started to kick some ass!

**You certainly did get big, and we know size matters. Since they say it's all in a name, what's the story with yours?**

Let me tell you something. If you call yourself Tiny, you know you're secure! I know I'm gifted. I'm big all over. I'm not little nowhere!

**So do you like your ladies to live large too?**

Anybody who knows me knows I've always had this thing about petite women. If they're 5'5" or shorter, 90 to 120 pounds, I'm cool. To me, it looks good when a big man has a little wife.

**Well, you certainly could take care of her. Like when you played a bodyguard in *Judgement Day*. With Ice-T. What bodies would you love to guard?**

The top three choices would be Meg Ryan, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and Salma Hayek. Then there's Angela Bassett, Nia Long, Lisa Ling, Jennifer Lopez, and Halle Berry.

**That's some rainbow of lady flavors!**

I don't need to have barbecued meat all the time! I like shrimp fried rice, you know what I'm saying? I like taco bells, too, boy [*laughs*]!

**That's food for thought. You know, they say it's not what's on the surface that truly counts.**


I like beautiful women because I'm so ugly, but I also like a woman who I can take on walks, play basketball with, is very family oriented, and has really got my back. I want to love some lady very much. I want to start my own family. My mother and father have been married 45 years. I had great teachers.

**What's the best advice you've ever heard on finding a soul mate?**

My grandmother Rawsie Lister was Lucille Ball's maid. She told me to get a woman who's a church woman in public and a whore behind closed doors and she'll be a good wife.

**Damn, Grandma! The Lister family secrets revealed! ☞**





V FASHION

Purple and black wool  
sweater by Iceberg,  
sunglasses by Ducci

# Design o' the Times

Get busy this fall in clothing covered in stars, stripes, plaids, herringbone, geometrics, and houndstooth. Don't try to adjust your eyes, just get graphic.  
*Photographs by Walter Chin; Styling by Emil Wilbekin*



HAIR BY: STEVE GRANITZMAN; MAKEUP BY: ROCKY AT LOUIS LUCHIANI; MENI STYLING BY MARCOLOTTI; STYLING BY: DAVID LAUREN; STYLING BY: DAVID LAUREN; STYLING BY: DAVID LAUREN; STYLING BY: DAVID LAUREN


(From left) Camel silk square-print shirt, green tweed pant, chocolate silk square-print scarf, and brown leather moccasin, all by Tom Ford for Gucci, gold watch by Rolex; tan and white mink herringbone coat, pink and gold Luxe: priviled dress and bandanna, and beige ostrich flap bag, all by Tom Ford for Gucci; beige python shoe with turquoise piping by Versace; brown and white silk French-cliffed shirt, gray wool V-neck vest with silk front printed panel, black and white herringbone pant, and brown leather boots, all by Tom Ford for Gucci

All makeup by L'Oréal: Peeri Smoldering Eye Glaze, Twilight Super Liner Perfect Tip! Eyelining Pen, Moon Gleam Quick Stick Face & Body Blush, Revealing Rouge Pulp Liquid Lipcolour, and Blackest Red Jet-Set Quick Dry Nail Enamel




Heather gray cashmere turtleneck sweater with graphic pattern and black wool pant, both by Emporio Armani, black patent-leather boots by Fendi; gray horizontal-striped sleeveless dress by Moschino Couture, gray wool pinstriped shoes by Gianfranco Ferré, silver bracelet by DKNY; black leather and gray tweed sleeveless dress and black leather knee-length boots with red sash, both by Bottega Veneta

All makeup by Ilman Makeup: (Left) 04 Shadow, 01 Lash, 06 Lip Pencil, 13 Lips Glorious, Glamorous Colour Lipstick, and 10 Shiny & Sexy Shine Lipcolour; (right) 08 Shadow, 05 Blush, and 03 Shiny & Sexy Shine Lipcolour



Red and pink mink patchwork fur coat by Dolce & Gabbana, red pinstriped cotton blouse, pink and red corduroy striped capri pant, and brown patent leather shoes, all by D&G Dolce & Gabbana, gold face earrings and choker, both by DKNY; pink paisley corduroy jacket and pant and pink paisley cotton shirt, all by D&G Dolce & Gabbana; sunglasses by Diesel. All makeup by Avon: Peacock Eye Shadow and Goddess Lipcolor.



Green and blue silk square-patterned  
coatdress by Versace, red, brown  
and black fur bag by Fendi  
All makeup by Tommy Hilgert: Light  
Porcelain Set It Up Oil-Free Founda-  
tion SPF 15, Chicago Borderline Eye  
Pencil, Power Blue Retro Liner, Liquid  
Eyeliner, Call Me Small Talk Lip Pencil,  
Boogie Woogie Fast Talk Lip Shine,  
and Charlotte Frost Rise Nail Color





Black wool vest with brown, rust, and cream silk printed front panel, charcoal oxford tweed pant, and brown scarf with beige square pattern (worn around neck) all by Tom Ford for Diesel; brown leather shoes by Sergio Rossi; orange and beige leather dress and orange, red, and gold quilted bag, both by Fendi; two-toned leather sunglasses by Tom Ford for Gucci  
All makeup by Pretty Pretty Cosmetics; Cervetto Eye Smoother; Armani Kohl Eye Pencil; Huda's Mascara; Dolce & Gabbani Face-Save; and Driesd Lipsers



Tan and black wool striped vest,  
pant, hat, and scarf, all by  
**Alessandro Dell'Acqua**, brown  
leather loafer by **Cala Haan**;  
beige and black wool  
houndstooth jacket and skirt,  
both by **Alessandro dell'Acqua**,  
ring by **John Hardy Collection**,  
sandals by **Sergio Rossi**



(Clockwise) Top, burgundy, and silver Linnk striped top and skirt with paisley detail, both by Ultra Cabata; sunglasses by Gucci; bangles and beige wool striped sweater by Byblos; John Bartlett, plum corduroy butterfly-print pant with diamanté detail by D&G Dolce & Gabbana; multicolored silk striped blouse and brown wool and silk tweed pant, both by Missoni; pink rhinestone sunglasses by Versace; red and black silk optical-print shirt and black and white jeans with rhinestone appliqué, both by Roberto Cavalli; sunglasses by Romeo Gigli; green and pink silk turtle-neck blouse and burgundy velvet pant, both by Iceberg; silver bracelet by DKNY.  
SEE THE DETAILS




**V** STYLIST

# DEEP COVER

*Sometimes less is more. Baby Phat, the new ladies' lingerie, intimates, and sportswear line by Phat Farm, takes underwear to the outer limits.*

*Photographs by Jennifer Robbins; Styling by Angela Arambulo*



(Opposite page, from left) On May-Pale blue microfiber bra and thong with dangling crystals, both by Baby Phat; diamond ring with round center stone by Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels

All makeup by Chanel; Silver Duo-Spectral eye shadow, sapphire Eye Liner Duo, Stardust Triple Colour Crayon, Pulsar Glossier lip gloss, and Mercure Nail Color

On Natane: Black triangle mesh bra and thong with Swarovski crystal detail, both by Baby Phat; diamond hoop earrings and heart-shaped diamond on platinum chain, both by Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels

All makeup by Urban Decay: Blush Power Mascara, Disco 2000 Powder Eye Shadow, Dubana/Blusion Powder Blush, and Cyber Pink Holographic Gloss

(This page) On Natane: Leopard-print bra and denim shorts with gold draping chains, both by Baby Phat; gold hoop earrings and choker, both by DKNY; gold bracelets by Bijoux Givenchy

**On Telesh:** Black cotton bra with white lace trim by Baby Phat, brown full-length faux-fur coat by Baby Phat Faux Fur Collection, diamond pendant earrings and diamond teardrop necklace with yellow diamond, both by Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels. All makeup by Helene Rubenstein: Iron Jade Colour Fusion Mono eye shadow, Forest Green Spectacular Liner, Forest Green Vertiginous Mascara, Fluorescent Coral Loose Powder, and Cyber Ritual Rouge lipstick.





On May: Pink cotton logo T-shirt and black and white animal-print lace bra and panty, all by **Baby Phat**. diamond hoop earrings and diamond ring with round center stone, both by **Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels**. crystal bracelets by **Swarovski**. SEE THE DETAILS

**V** STYLE

# SECOND TIME AROUND

No sophomore slumps here. Capone-N-Noreaga, DJ Clue, and Sadat X prove they can make the grade.

*Photographs by Pauline St. Denis;  
Styling by Kadi Agüeros*



## CAPONE-N-NOREAGA

After hitting hard with their underground classic debut, *The War Report*, Capone, 24, and Noreaga, 22, finally follow up with *The Reunion*.

On Noreaga: Red cotton hooded zip-front sweatshirt and blue denim jeans, both by Mecca USA; white cotton logo T-shirt by NAG Jeans. On Capone: Gray cotton logo T-shirt by NAG Jeans, blue denim jeans by Mecca USA

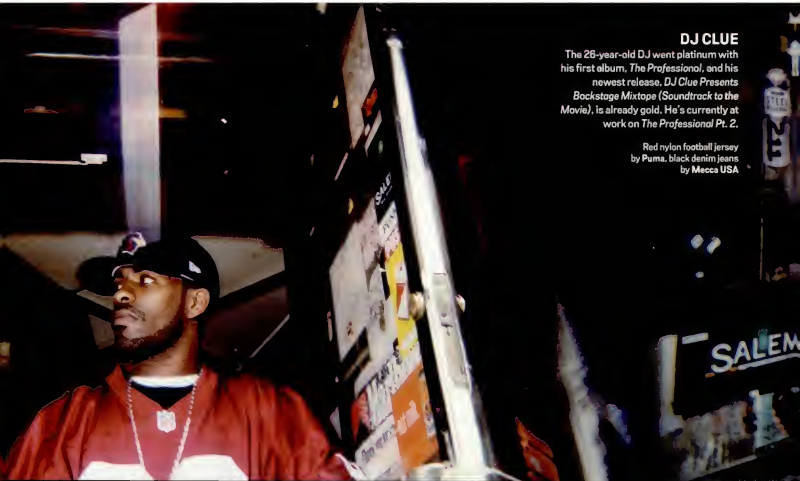




#### DJ CLUE

The 26-year-old DJ went platinum with his first album, *The Professional*, and his newest release, *DJ Clue Presents Backstage Mixtape (Soundtrack to the Movie)*, is already gold. He's currently at work on *The Professional Pt. 2*.

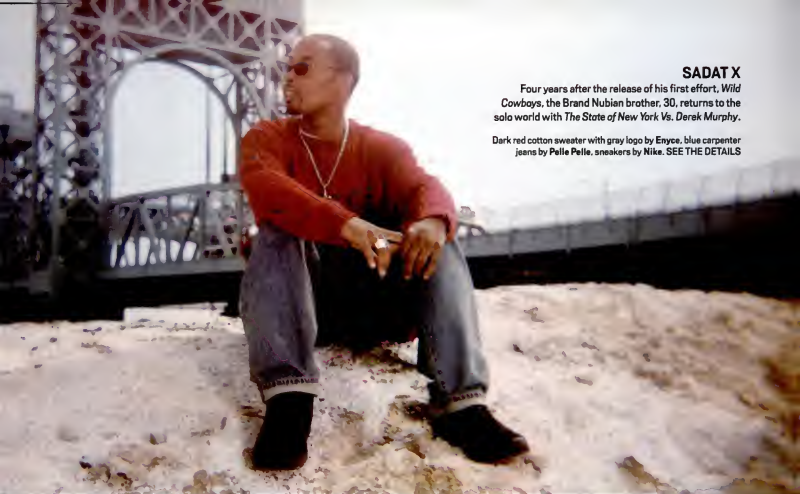
Red nylon football jersey  
by Puma, black denim jeans  
by Mecca USA



## SADAT X

Four years after the release of his first effort, *Wild Cowboys*, the Brand Nubian brother, 30, returns to the solo world with *The State of New York Vs. Derek Murphy*.

Dark red cotton sweater with gray logo by Enyce, blue carpenter jeans by Pelle Pelle, sneakers by Nike. SEE THE DETAILS



# NEW & IMPROVED

V FACE

## TAMIA

Since she stepped onto the scene in 1995, R&B singer Tamia (Mrs. Grant Hill, for those who don't know) has turned us out with her stunning good looks and a string of soulful songs that leave us yearning for more. "You Put a Move on My Heart," "Slow Jams," and "Spend My Life With You" (a duet with Eric Benét) have electrified fans with their passion and all earned Grammy nominations—making this 25-year-old Canada native a voice to be reckoned with. Releasing her second album, *A Nu Day*, and buying a new house with Hill, Tamia is filling her world with a new attitude and flavor all her own. "This album is a little eclectic," she says of *A Nu Day's* production (by Missy Elliott, Dallas Austin, and others). "There's still some sexiness, but, for me, it's all about fun."

**FACE THE WORLD** "My favorite thing is from the drugstore: Neutrogena Fresh Foaming Cleanser. But when I'm traveling, I use the Pond's Cleansing and Makeup Remover Towelettes because you don't have to carry a ton of products in your luggage."

**THE WHOLE KIT AND CABOODLE** "I'm one of those people who carry around their entire makeup kit and only use one thing. I love M.A.C Sheer Coverage Foundation because it's very light, and I use it as a concealer too. I also love Nars blush in Orgasm. I'm a sucker for gloss; my favorites are Versace and Stila LipGlace; they're nice and creamy."

**HAIR WARS** Curly versus straight—what works best for Tamia? "Right now, I'm wearing my hair curly; it's just easier for me to take care of. It got on my nerves to have it straightened all the time. To keep my hair from drying out, I use Kiehl's Creme with Silk Groom and Aveda Brilliant Sheen." *Tasha Turner*



All makeup by L'Oréal: Plum Breaks Eyecolour Duo, Mocho Rose Light Softening Blush, Burgeniya Automatic Lip Liner, and Ripe Rouge Pulp Liquid LipColour. Black strapless dress by Plain Sud, shoes by Tiffi Dusk, gold necklace and ring, both by MONDERA.com. SEE THE DETAILS

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Advertisement

sound that launched an artist the caliber of D'Angelo. Stone and D'Angelo became musical soul mates early in her career. With **Black Diamond** Stone takes the listener on a wonderful voyage that encompasses the joys and pain, comedy and drama, of her life.

apparent that LaFace's newest star, Pink, is here to stay. The sight of the fast-rising motorcycle off a rooftop (see *Black Diamond*) is not (see *Black Diamond*)

woman named Soul Train's "Lady of Soul" especially when she is as dynamic a star as Deborah Cox. When "Nobody's Supposed to Be Here" smashed records in 1999 she became a superstar. She can even be seen on TV in her recurring "Nash Bridges" role. Besides her television appearances, Deborah has also appeared in the film *Love Come Down*. All this begs the question, is there anything this woman can't do? Deborah's first five years at Arista have taken her travel around the world, including tours in England, Germany, and Holland. With all of her accomplishments, it's no wonder she won back-to-back Soul Train Awards and a coveted American

# WIBBE HITS

While he was a member of the unprecedented... Called Queen of the... ground-breaking... respects, with art... Rhymes... tantly, revved... this sea... envelope

next super... Emotional is... pieces of music this... perform in a small club... immediately signed this one... former. It seems as though that was one of the smartest moves in Comb's career, as Thomas is a sensation, expanding Bad Boy's roster further into the R&B groove.

... occurred, times... era of Pop with a capital

Records has its... onal is one of... ter pieces of... er seeing him... club. Sent his... former. He has... the current... ng. However... ment to their... their mutual... ch greatly... though in

... has been com... Gerald, and Chaka... of Bad Boy." The... Records, Faith is... rough her many... ver late n... and the Notorious... er stunning vocals on her solo... Accomplished in all areas of R&B, her album *Keep The Faith* cemented her status as a hit-maker.

Anyone who has walked down the... who Tyrese is, or... que

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VIBE



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# revolutions

**SADE**  
LOVERS ROCK



BY CHEO HODARI COKER

The rock: Not a diamond ring or a diamond life but that diamond girl who shoulders your emotional baggage and promises to always be by your side. The one who reminds you, in this post-Jerry Springer/Jenny Jones age, that love and drama don't necessarily have to go hand-in-hand. That's Sade.



The soulful yet dysfunctional narratives of R. Kelly and Mary J. Blige were the background music to the tumultuous soap-opera romances of your youth, but it was Sade who helped you mature and calm your ass down. After that last "This is it, I've had it" argument, Sade was the person who made you say "I'm sorry," even though you knew you were right. "Love is stronger than pride," she sang, and you believed her.

Lovers Rock, her first release since 1992's *Love Deluxe*, proves that such a remarkable voice can survive eight years between albums and still sound vital. Her voice is controlled, elegant, and radiantly cool—so beautiful, so simple, so necessary. No vocal tricks or over-the-top theatrics, no overblown arrangements to hide any deficiencies in her voice, no guest rappers for street credibility or juice with the kiddies. While the iced-out bulletproof divas come off like gaudy baubles from Jacob the Jeweler—flash and no class—Sade is a Bulgari necklace: expensive as hell and worth every penny.

"By Your Side" kicks things off nicely, but it isn't until the second song, "Flow," that you feel the full ramifications of Ms. Adu's understated power. Over a bare-bones hip hop snare track and a wa-we guitar, her voice melds with the rhythm, becoming at once haunting, warm, and attentive: "See me, flowing, like the river to the sea / You come down, you go up, the waves rush over me."

"King of Sorrow" raises the bar. Sade elevates the timbre of her voice, singing with a volume and passion she has rarely displayed. "I want to cook you a soup that warms your soul / But nothing will change, nothing will change at all," she wails. You can feel her optimism tinged with pain. But the next verse makes this song different from your average lament: "I suppose I could just walk away / Would I disappoint my future if I stay?" When you hear her sing it, you know she understands the lyrics and means them. It's that subtle yet important difference that separates Stevie Wonder from Joe, Aretha Franklin from Mary J. Blige, and Sade from just about everyone else.

Sade cowrote and coproduced all of the songs with help from Mike Pela and her longtime collaborator Stuart Matthewman. The tracks have a spare, laid-back feel to them and offer few surprises—which works both to Sade's benefit and her detriment. On one hand, standout songs like "King of Sorrow," the rollicking, carefree "All About Our Love," and the touching "The Sweetest Gift" (a beautiful lullaby to her 3-year-old daughter, ill), are right up there with classics like "Smooth Operator" and "Your Love Is King." On the other hand, none of these new songs surpasses those favorites. Sade is so good at what she does that, like Michael Jordan, nothing short of a 60-point performance will blow you over. It's just Mike being Mike or, in this case, Sade being Sade.

The title track, however, makes you realize why you love her familiar, steady sound and why she shouldn't change it. She's the voice you cling to in a storm, and—unlike Michael Jackson, Madonna, or Prince—reinvention

isn't the key to her longevity. Sade's secret is giving the audience what it craves. There's a Coca-Cola, Mercedes-Benz, and now Sade—not new, just improved. There's a Sade song for every occasion, and *Lovers Rock* reminds you just how much you missed her, how much she still has to offer, and just how glad you are she has finally returned.



PRODIGY

H.N.I.C.

LOUD



A consistent MC, Prodigy builds on his previous work, defies audience expectations, and steadily increases his fan base with each accomplishment. His solo debut, *H.N.I.C.* (Head Nigga in Charge), introduces listeners to a side of him that isn't always rocking Mobb Deep's tried-and-true gun-blast formula. As a result, *H.N.I.C.* stands as a slight departure and a vivid portrait of P as an artist.

*H.N.I.C.* is an invitation into the happy, sad, and violent world of Prodigy's life. On "Veteran's Memorial," he offers a sobering reflection of his early days, when he and his fellow Mobbster, Havoc, would record demos and shop record deals. Instead of another "listen to my demo" routine, he includes details about the many friends who have died and aren't here to see him shine. Prodigy addresses familiar Mobb topics on "Lumar Support" and "Y.B.E." (featuring Twin and B.G., respectively) but from a different angle. He expresses sadness at the thought of young black men choosing to earn money through illicit means and blows holes in the theory of "survival crimes" along the way.

The most personal track, "You Can Never Feel My Pain," offers

a candid discussion of his struggle with sickle cell anemia. After describing his love-hate relationship with the prescription drugs that keep him alive and lamenting about his inability to engage in sports, he tells his rap peers that their complaints about money and living in the projects can't match his more severe, life-threatening problems.

Between thought-provoking meditations on life and art, P squeezes in a few of the hardcore club bangers that keep him paid. "3," featuring Cormega, opens with a booming orchestra that fades into lustrous harp crescendos; the hypertense title track sounds like an action-movie theme. Then there's "What U Rep," on which he and Noreaga team up over an ill harpsichord to humiliate peers with lines like: "Queens niggas like to shoot / Ain't afraid to fight / While you niggas wear Pampers / Like the cradle tight." Producers such as Havoc, The Alchemist, EZ Elpee, and P himself give *H.N.I.C.* enough hard snare snaps and gloomy strings for the hardcore Mobb fans while redefining the formula with upbeat tracks and jumpy piano chords and samples.

Overall, *H.N.I.C.* is an outstanding combination of diverse sounds and complex themes. As long as Prodigy is rapping, the bridge ain't over.

David Crowley

ratings





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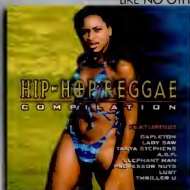
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revolutions

VARIOUS ARTISTS

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE  
SOUNDTRACK: BAMBOOZLED  
MOTOWN



Spike Lee has built previous joints on the music of Prince, Stevie Wonder, and Public Enemy, but the soundtrack to his new film, *Bamboozled*, assembles all these visionaries and others to create a rarity: music that compels you to dance and think.

The film examines the situation of blacks in today's allegedly post-blaxploitation entertainment industry, and the soundtrack offers running musical commentary worthy of the editorial page. Following the acerbic hip-hop opener, "Blak Iz Blek," by the Mau Meus (Mos Def, Canibus, Charli Baltimore, and others), Stevie Wonder weighs in with a hymn-like bit of profundity ("Misrepresented People") that couches its truths in the most seductive musical language available. This simple screed returns Wonder to the tone of enlightened



engagement that marked his early-'70s heyday. Chuck D gathers a coalition of insurrectionists (the Roots and Zack de la Rocha) to update PE's classic "Burn Hollywood Burn." Erykah Badu coyly reinterprets the Cheke Khen hit "Hollywood." And Prince's "2045 Radical Man" offers a scalding critique of opportunistic music-business vampires.

There are several more visceral diversions, like Motown newcomer India Arie's atmospheric reverie "In My Head," to stop the collection from getting too weighty. This balance between head and hips keeps the soundtrack beguiling. Tom Moon

DAVE HOLLISTER

CHICAGO '85...THE MOVIE  
DREAMWORKS



Dave Hollister gave tough love new meaning on his somewhat overlooked solo debut, *Ghetto Hymns*. Rather than waste his sinewy vocals arranging poetic bouquets, he confronted babymama drama and other practical topics head-on. His second solo album, *Chicago '85...The Movie*, continues in a similar vein although the new songs don't quite reach the same intensity.

Still, Hollister is a working man's balladeer, dealing with women in situations that often test his resolve to do the right thing. On "One Woman Man," he finally settles down after years of running the streets, and it takes all of his willpower to keep from firing up an old flame. "Woman Will" explores



the consequences of a clandestine liaison, while "Take Care of Home" explains why a woman's happiness should be a priority.

Hollister is more than willing to take responsibility for his own actions—wherever they lead—but he's not going to let anyone clown him. On "You Can't Say," he makes it clear he'll tolerate only so much nonsense. In this man's world, those thorny issues stem any rosy sentiments. *Steve Jones*

DAVE HOLLISTER: NIKKAI ALSTON

## revolutions

### STICKY FINGAZ BLACK TRASH: THE AUTO- BIOGRAPHY OF KIRK JONES UNIVERSAL

○○○○

Throwing guns in the air and slamming everyone in sight, Onyx were plenty angry in '93. But the crazy baldheads' hyperbolic rage soon lost its appeal. These days, fans prefer the more convincing cold-blooded nihilism of Mobb Deep and the Lox, leaving Onyx members Fredro Starr and Sticky Fingaz to seek work in Hollywood. On his first solo album, an engaging fictional account of the life of an ex-con, Sticky finds balance between acting and rapping.

The story: Kirk Jones gets out of jail and plunges right back into street life, voicing plenty of self-destructive sentiment ("I'm Not Dying") over murky gangster boogie. The beats slow down during the surprisingly reflective moments—Kirk contemplates his relationship with God, money, and his baby brother—that temper the violence. *Black Trash's*



highlight is a fiery courtroom battle with some dramatic supporting players: Canibus plays an eyewitness, Redmen an attorney, and Rah Digga the judge who sentences Kirk to prison.

Sticky sacrifices the narrative for comic-relief cuts like "Ghetto" and "What If I Was White," but for the most part the theme remains on track, leading to an exciting, if fatalistic, Louis Armstrong-meets-the-Hughes brothers conclusion. *Trash* proves that Sticky Fingaz is a lot more thoughtful than he used to be. Even if he ain't mad anymore, at least he can still act like it. *Neil Drumming*

### PROFYLE NOTHIN' BUT DRAMA MOTOWN

○○○○



Their name is the sort of cliché you might expect to find on *Star Search*, but this Shreveport, La., vocal quartet got game. Brothers Face and Hershey and their cousins L'Jai and Baby Boy have hit on something different. *Nothin' but Drama* is a musical diary chronicling a few days in a single man's love life—the

breakup, the make up, the nights with the dogs at the club, and all the turbulent ups, downs, and contradictions of life on the romantic front lines. The theme works well, a very realistic story unfolding through song.

Behind the smooth harmonies and hard beats, Profyle steer clear of tired playa anthems. The hit single "Liar," about the kind of breakup you don't want to have, isn't glamorized or self-righteous. "Can We Talk About Us" finds them worrying about never getting a chance to "be back with family." A track about creepin' when she's not looking, "Nasty," is the CD's best song. Teddy Riley, who popped up to produce "Damn" (featuring Monifah), and Joe, who penned and produced the smooth-flowing "I Do," are among the guests on the album. Profyle keep it real, and that reality is always surprising. *David Thigpen*

# DANGEROUS.



## STICKY FINGAZ [ BLACK TRASH ] THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF KIRK JONES



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Hugo (left) and Williams

## OUT OF THIS WORLD: THE NEPTUNES

The Neptunes might have the most diverse résumé of any production team in history. Who else cranks out remixes and hits for R&B singers like Kelis, hip-hop artists like Jay-Z, rockers like Limp Bizkit, and unclassifiable geniuses like Prince?

Teddy Riley discovered the Neptunes in 1992 after they performed in a talent show at Princess Anne High School in Virginia Beach, Va. At the time, Pharrell Williams was playing drums and rapping while his partner, Chad "Chase" Hugo, played keyboards. The two began producing tracks for Blackstreet's debut album and haven't had much downtime since. Upcoming projects include work on Jennifer Lopez's next CD and a solo project for Zach de la Rocha of Rage Against the Machine. "We're doing a lot more rock now," says Williams. "Lenny [Kravitz] is interested, so that's where my head is right now."

### THE NEPTUNES' UNFORGETTABLE COLLABORATIONS:

#### "GOT YOUR MONEY" OL' DIRTY BASTARD, FEATURING KELIS (1999)

**Hugo:** "When he wrote the first verse, it took him a while to write. We had the beat rolling for a long time. The next thing you know, he was like, 'Okey! I wanna do vocals.' And he rushed the engineer and the sound guy to get the tape ready. They rolled the tape and he said the first line, and that was it. Then he said, 'Stop the tape.' He was revved up to get the track done, and then he just stopped. He ended up finishing it later, but it was cool because he vibes on his instinct. You always hear about him in the news, and that's how he works too—spontaneously."

#### "GIVE IT TO ME" JAY-Z (2000)

**Hugo:** "Jay called and we flew out to New York and made the beat."

**Williams:** "I wanted the track to reflect attention on old soul music and where it came from. I was thinking of Curtis Mayfield. Jay-Z liked it and laid the vocals right there. It happened reel quick, and Jay laid it crazy. He's one of those artists who just keeps on progressing."

#### "SHAKE YA ASS" MYSTIKAL (2000)

**Hugo:** "We met Mystikal in L.A. and did a song together for the *Any Given Sunday* soundtrack. He was feeling us and he wanted to work with us again." **Williams:** "On this song, I was singing the chorus like Eddie Kendricks from the Temptations. If you like Mystikal, get some old Temptations records; hear what inspired me."

#### "BY YOUR SIDE (REMIX)" SADE (2000)

**Hugo:** "They gave us the original song for that and wanted us to do the music, but it was, like, 76 beats per minute, so we ended up speeding up the track a lot and gave it a whole different vibe. Originally, it sounded like some Aaron Neville country song, but when you hear it now it's on some funky jazz vibe."

#### "ALL I SAID" GURU FEATURING MACY GRAY, (2000)

**Hugo:** "Guru was doing the *Jazzmatazz* record and wanted someone to sing on the track we presented. So we got Macy, with her trademark voice, and she came on and blessed it. She's very talented. Some people judge her by her squeaked-out voice, but I think she's real creative and vibed out. She really made that song crazy."

#### "I DON'T CARE ANYMORE" KELIS (2000)

**Williams:** "She gets it. All we had to do was rearrange the original Phil Collins song, and she came in and did her thing, looking cute. She came prepared but didn't even know what she was gonna hear. It was cool."

#### "D GAME" 504 BOYZ (2000)

**Williams:** "We were out in L.A. doing a remix for Prince at the Record Plant, and I originally had Q-Tip on the track. Master P was at the pool table talking shit to one of my boys. He was saying he was so good, but we double-teamed him and beat him at that game. I said, 'Why I never got a beat on you?' And he told me, 'I got my boys to do my own shit.' Then he came in the room, listened to a beat I had, and he liked it. We just did it right then on the spot!"

#### "GLORY" PERRY FARRELL (2000)

**Hugo:** "Rock people are different. He's clean now, but he told us stories about being in Jane's Addiction when he was wacked out, standing in the middle of the street, tripping out with the guy who invented LSD. When we were in the studio, he brought in his little Roland Groovebox and he was freaking that thing! He's from rock 'n' roll and there he was making techno tracks in the middle of our rock-hip-hop session."

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BY DIMITRI EHRLICH



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02

**FREE FLESH-N-BONE**

This original member of Bone Thugs-N-Harmony is currently locked up, but it hasn't prevented him from delivering his strongest album yet. The master of the melodic thug sound returns. Featuring "I Can Go Back" his tribute to Eazy, Buggzy, Tu Pac and Big Pun. In Stores Now.



**FIRESTARR AKA FREDRO STARR**

His current single "THAT B THEM! DYING FOR RAP" is already blowing up on the street through Fat Beats, his new video is blowing on BET and The Box. Catch him now on Moesha. Is he a TV star or a thug? You decide...



**HAYSTAK**

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**SLASH'S SNAKE PIT**

The most influential rock guitarist of the 90's returns with his latest group project. Reviewers are saying this is the CD Guns and Roses should have made. If you dig kick ass rock and roll this is the record for you. In Stores Now.

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revolutions

I've long kept a safe distance from hip hop's experimental extremes since withstanding barrages of brainiac verbiage (a.k.a. rapping one's ass off) over a spiritless boogie is just too much damn work for my precious ears. But with their splendid new singles, "Iron Galaxy" b/w "Straight Off the D.I.C." (Def Jux), Vordul and Vest Air, of Harlem USA's unorthodox duo

**CANNIBALOX**, never neglect the charms of rhyming in time and always keep it progressive. On the former, Vest Air delicately enunciates profundities like, "I rest my head on 115/ But miracles only happen on 34th / So I guess life is maan," while Company Flow producer E-I-P constructs a regal synth track somewhere between Giorgio Moroder's mellow side and the theme from *The George Michael Sports Machine*. The latter delivers a dope death merch massaged by celestial,



Necro

ascending keyboards and Vordul's self-described "animal raps."

No mere rhyme animal, the infamous **NECRO** (the poster boy for bad taste: Kool G Rap as a Brooklyn Jew (right down to the lips), a 24-year-old MC/producer/filmmaker whose explicit output is as entertaining as it is offensive. Deciding what's what is part of the fun as one absorbs Necro's debut LP, *I Need Drugs*. While it assembles many past essentials (1997's "Get on Your Knees," a Dionne Warwick-sampling ode to fadistic last year's "The Most Sadistic" with big brother Ill

Bill of Non Phixion, which opens with the line, "Dancin' on your grave like Baryshnikov"), *Drugs* introduces new goodies like the Boogio Down Productions-inspired sex diatribe "Hoe Blow" and the title track's sand-up of LL Cool J's "I Need Love." (I wonder what James "G.O.A.T." Smith thinks about this one.) Added bonus: three frenetic mix-show freestyles just in time for the holidays, the (arguably) most volatile of which features the feel-good yuletide lyric, "Jesus ain't nothin' but a corpse to me." Somebody say, ho-ho-ho!

HEAVY ROTATION

RASCALZ, FEATURING BARRINGTON LEVY

"Top of the World" (Figure IV)

KAZI "A.V.E.R.A.G.E." (Stones Throw/Fat Beats)

MR. LIF "Be Out" (Def Jux/Ozoon)

MR. DIBBS "Live in Memphis" (Nu Gruv Alliance)

DJ ELL, FEATURING ILL BILL "Who's the Best" (Fat Beats)

## revolutions

### CHANTÉ MOORE

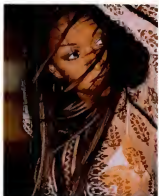
EXPOSED

MICA



Neither as raw as Mary J. Blige nor as eternal as Sade, urban songbird Chanté Moore has always been considered the perfect quiet-storm queen. Moore's fourth disc, *Exposed*, attempts to change her good-girl image to that of a more world-weary woman. Or, as she says on the lush "Bitter," "e moving teetement that invokes Minnie Riperton's phrasings. "I'm gonna speak from my heart / I'm not your dog, nigga."

The Jermeine Dupri-produced dance number, "Straight Up," finds Moore being frank ("Excusa ma, are you spoken for? / Cause I don't see no ring"), while her voice retains its enchanting purity. She's the life of the party on the Tim & Bob-sculpted "Teke Cara of Me"—which, although it features De Brat, sadly sounds like a 1990 Paula Abdul club hit.



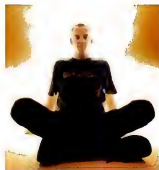
It's on the smoothed-out ballads that Moore really flexes her vocal delivery. The red-light slow jams "I'm Keepin' You" and "Train of Thought" capture a songstress who knows how to heat up her lyrics without burning the words and possess a tenderness that never translates on the up-tempo eonge. *Exposed* might display Moore's variety of styles, but true fans may wish she'd stayed off the dance floor and spent more time in the boudoir.

Michael A. Gonzales

### FATBOY SLIM

HALFWAY BETWEEN THE GUTTER  
AND THE STARS

ASTRALWERKS



With his last album, *You've Come a Long Way, Baby*, Fatboy Slim (a.k.a. Norman Cook) delivered big sexy dance music to the masses on his way to becoming a glistening pop star. He sheds the bodacious, hip hop-inspired Big Beat influence on his third album by diving headlong into the trance-like

blissness of his club roots.

Slim rode Lord Finesse's "funk soul brother" voice on 1.5 million records sold and returns with *Bootsy Collins*, dub poet Mutaaruka, a Baptist sermon, and itchy-voiced popster Macy Gray. But it's not just adding soul to the soulless—Slim's instrumentals are compelling on their own, and he uses the vocals as a means of lulling the listener into total dance submission ("Star 69," "Retox"). Slim's good at eliciting emotion too, as on "Talking 'Bout My Baby," which uses a swelling, ambient keyboard wash to create a rising-dance, post-dreg epiphany, and Gray's cathartic, church-like spiritual, "Demons."

Noticeably absent, though, is the way Fatboy Slim's tracks smirk all-knowingly. And it's with that restricted spirit that this album sometimes borders on downright lethargy, despite its occasional moments of bliss. *Joseph Patel*

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**KEITH SWEAT**

**DIDN'T SEE ME COMING**  
ELEKTRA



Critic Nelson George once called Keith Sweat the Luther Vandross of his generation. But Sweat hasn't sustained a 12-year recording career by coasting on just his vocal chops or his telegenic good looks. On his new album, *Didn't See Me Coming*, the veteran crooner teams up with a group of younger stars on tracks



that boast state-of-the-chart contemporary R&B and hip-hop-soul arrangements.

Busta Rhymes and Rah Digga join him on the thumping, deftly syncopated "Things," while on the sinuous "He Say She Say," Sweat goes one-on-one with T-Boz, who uses her breathy, low register to seductive effect. Lil' Mo also proves a sexy duet partner on the slow-groove scorcher "I'll Trade (A Million Bucks)."

But the most compelling cuts on the album are those that don't require Sweat to share the spotlight. On the sweetly shimmering "Real Man," the fervent "Only Wanna Please You," and the lithe, crisp "Games," his tangy, burnished tenor comes to the fore, sounding every bit as glorious as it did in his new-jack heyday. By cannily adapting his enduring talent to changing times and tastes, Sweat makes it clear that he plans to keep on coming for a long time.

*Elysa Gardner*

**PHIFE DAWG**

**VENTILATION: DA LP**  
GOODNIGHT/SUPPERHIN



With Q-Tip already an established star and Ali Shaheed Muhammad scoring gold with his first post-A Tribe Called Quest project, Lucy Pearl, it's now Phife Dawg's turn to show end prove all by his lonesome. *With Ventilation: Da LP*, the five-foot assassin establishes himself as a streetwise iconoclast capable of mind-boggling vocal gymnastics.

The album opens with a brief acouetic-guitar ditty that will make heads worry that Phife has gone soft—but only for about 45 seconds. A lyrical pyrotechnician, Phife wields the mike like a flamethrower, scorching listeners with hectic rhyme schemas that morph from one flow to another with true virtuosity. He tries on rap styles like most MCs try on sneakers, switching from the staccato assault of "Lemme Find Out" (featuring Pate Rock) to a singsongy old-school lilt on the unepogetically horny disco-flavored single "Ben Dova." On the album's best cut, "Alphabet Soup," Phife recites the glory days of the Native Tongues but injects a harder edge.

On "Beats, Rhymes, & Phife," he looks back on growing up in a West Indian household in Queens, N.Y., and demonstrates the special mix of humor and intelligence that made Tribe famous. *Dimitri Ehrlich*



**SENSATIONAL**

**HEAVYWEIGHTER**  
WORD SOUND



Sensational's third disc, *Heavyweight*—which sounds as if it were recorded in a muddy basement polluted by cheeba smog—is the antithesis of urban sickness. While labels such as Rawkus have rediscovered the joyful noise emerging from the underground, the Brooklyn-based WordSound Recordings is determined to be grimmer than the competition.

Utilizing beats dirtier than dub and rawer than the RZA, this self-produced project represents with knucklehead tributes ("Sittin' on Top"), sexual gangsters ("Tearing It Up"), and slurred surrealism ("Paper Chase"). Those who yearn for sunny, flossy black pop should stay away: Sensational is the rap equivalent of smoky back staircases, dusky clubs, and barely lit street corners. *Heavyweight* is music to get you lifted.

*Michael A. Gonzales*

**PLANET ASIA**

**THE LAST STAND**  
MONA HIP-HOP/LANDSPEED



On "Holdin' the Crown," Planet Asia proclaims, "I'm type selfish and I rhyme like I don't need help." Newly signed to Interscope, Asia has titled his final album as an indie

artist *The Last Stand*, a metaphorical middle finger to backpackers worldwide. Though the "Holdin' the Crown" sees him nodding toward his flossier future lifestyle ("I came to slap-box with you / My gladiator thoughts bring up issues / Got you leaving, feeling like I dissed you"), on "Head Honchos" he demurs, "I'm still cruddy to the floor / Type to battle at my-in-store," proving no amount of shine can rip up underground roots. *Jon Caramanica*

**GARNET SILK**

**GARNET SILK: THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION**

ATLANTIC  
★★★★

From the first thrill of Gamet Silk's unearthly vibrato soaring through the most inspirational reggae anthems since Bob Marley's, this double CD is a bittersweet reminder of the gift reggae music possessed too briefly. Released nearly five years after Silk's tragic death in a fire at the age of 28, this long-awaited collection gathers the fruits of his fleeting but prolific years as reggae's greatest hope. *The Definitive Collection* features "Mama Africa," "Slave," and "Zion in a Vision," among other unreleased tracks, rerecordings, and original productions. An impossibly soulful tenor, Silk came from reggae's sacred place, where rapture is tinged with rage. Listen and weep. *Elena Oumano*

PHIFE DAWG: ANDREW SARRIN; KEITH SWEAT: ERIC FANCIOLUCCI/RETNA; SENSATIONAL: TISHUAN WONG



Rising from a coffin to the sound of a thousand screams, a 5-foot-6-inch ruda boy with chipped teeth and flawlessly braided hair lifts a microphone to his lips and launches into a soaring rendition of Cher's "Believe." This is no karaoke nightmare—it's a live performance by one of dancehall's hottest vocalists. And once he's finished stretching Cher's aerobics-class anthem into a sweet reggae beat, you'll probably prefer it to the original.

GHOST is the type of character not even the craziest cartoonist could dream up—but in the virtual-reality zone known as the dancehall, he's very real. The first time you hear his trembling falsetto, you'll know he's a sensitive soul. But he's also a longtime resident of one of downtown Kingston's meanest streets, Matthews Lane—a neighborhood that gets so hot the locals call it Matches Lane. In the 11 years he has been making records, he has often been paired with a gruff-voiced DJ—first as half of the duo Ghost & Culture and later

# BOOM SHOTS

BY ROB KENNER

as one third of the mighty Monster Shack Crew. But on his second solo album, *Love You* (Music Ambassador), Ghost explores his softer side, proving that, as he says, "I'm a friendly ghost."

Spaghetti westerns and gangster movies are important sources of inspiration for many dancehall stars, but if there's one artist who inflamed Ghost's passion to sing, it has to be the man with the sparkly glove. "Me listen to Michael Jackson's *Thriller* top to bottom," he recalls. At the age of 6, he took his versions of M.J.'s songs and

dance routines and began mashing up barbecues and school talent shows, where, he says, "the place bust."

Ghost aims to pack as much melodrama, nervous energy, and physical pain into a line as possible. "I love to see everybody feel what I'm singing," he says. But producers weren't always feeling him. "Me haffi beg fi go a studio," he says. It was Patrick Roberts of Shocking Vibes who first gave Ghost a chance, in a session that resulted in an uninspired raggamuffin version of "Killing Me Softly," the Roberta Flack classic, that predated the *Fugees*. But with the release of *Love You*, Ghost's art has reached its highest level. "I wouldn't mind doing a whole album some nice slow, soft way," he says, "with me singing some nice ballads, like Celine Dion deh."

## HEAVY ROTATION: MORE REGGAE FLAVOR

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Ghost

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## revolutions

### TALIB KWELI & HI-TEK

REFLECTION ETHERAL

RAMKUS



When it comes to wholesome, heartfelt rap, it doesn't get any more idealistic or sincere than the work of Talib Kweli and his producer/partner, Hi-Tek. The duo has secured a place in New York's underground scene as hip hop's quiet conscience. After a string of successful singles, like "Fortified Live" and "The Manifesto," and Kweli's collaborative LP with Mos Def, *Mos Def & Talib Kweli are Black Star*, Kweli and Hi-Tek have

finally finished their thorough debut platter, *Reflection Eternal*.

Produced mainly by Hi-Tek, the album oscillates between the sublime neo-soul sounds popularized by Jay Dec and his Soulquarian brethren and faster, more dynamic neck snappers. "Too Late" exemplifies the former with its syrupy guitar licks, pleasing recorder hits, and complex percussion. Hi-Tek tips the ante on "Down for the Count," which cracks with marching-band intensity. Aided by strong performer from Xzibit and Rah Digga, Kweli slaps sucka MCs with his clever battle rhymes. The LP peaks with "Soul Rebels," a surprisingly funky, up-tempo collaboration with De La Soul that showcases some awesome word-play. *Reflection Eternal's* great weakness is Kweli's excessive preaching about the state of hip hop, but at least he cares. Perhaps he'll be able to make a few others care too.

Noah Callahan-Bever

### SPARKLE

TOLD YOU SO

MOTOWN



On her first solo effort without her mentor, R. Kelly, the princess of ghetto soul aims her rep the old-fashioned way: with pure skills. Whether she's reanimating old-school R&B on "Lovin' a Man" (replete with a classic Motown string arrangement and call-and-response vocals) or upping the hip hop-soul ante on the body-rocking "Into My Life," Sparkle has that ineffable superstar quality. On *Told You So*, she sings like she knows her destiny is large, and it isn't arrogance but well-deserved confidence.

On "The Ghetto," she coos a gentle, jazzy ode to the 'hood. But if Sparkle is the epitome of ghetto glam, she tilts the scale more toward glam this time. With "It's a Fact," she starts to swagger more, flexing her subtle vocals over a tight blues riff and a beat that struts.



Sparkle sounds like a woman who has already proved everything end is tired of stardom. Maybe that's why the album's lead track, "Don't Know Why," is about how weary she is of people talking about her. With a plaintive two-note piano melody and an understated but insistent beat, she sets things off by saying she just wants to be left alone. Now that's a declaration of independence.

Dimitri Ehrlich

## revolutions

### RONI SIZE/REPRAZENT

IN THE MODE  
ISLAND DEF. JAM  
○○○

Three years ago, Roni Size sat atop the burgeoning U.K. jungle scene. *New Forms*, his debut, was the genre's breakthrough work, earning club cred as well as mainstream accolades. Today, two-step garage is the hot sound on black British dance floors. Jungle, while still popular, has lost some of its cutting-edge appeal.

Perhaps in fear of impending irrelevance, Size has turned his energies toward the yet-unconquered U.S. with his second album, *In the Mode*. He imports Method Men ("Ghetto Celebrity"), Zack de la Roche ("Centre of the Storm"), and human noise box Rehzet ("In Tune With the Sound") for some transcendent translation. Even though his crossover moves are nice—de la Roche in particular cap-



italizes on the genre's inherent aggression—Size can't pull jungle out of its artistic rut. Excessive knob twiddling ("Mexican") and synth distortion ("In & Out") have replaced once-dominant funk.

*New Forms* rolled with furious, propulsive bass while retaining a sense of musicality, but this time around those sounds are beaten thin. Despite his inability to expand the palette, Size makes music that's technically skillful, perhaps more so than any producer in the field. In the end, however, *In the Mode* just regurgitates old forms. Jan Coramonic

### CRYSTAL SIERRA

MORENA  
VIRGIN

○○○○



When Latin music took off a few years ago, one thing was missing: Latin music. Nothing against Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez, but the house beats and pop elements in their tunes were so strong there wasn't much room for *sabor*. Now Crystal Sierra, a diva-in-training of Colombian descent, has finally delivered an album where the Latin

sound is at least as abundant as the R&B and hip hop. On *Morena*, Sierra's debut on Virgin Records, the *cumbia* and *vallenato* styles come through loud and clear.

Sierra also managed to get several hip hop heavyweights to help make this a record with enough appeal for those who don't speak a word of Spanglish. Swizz Beatz provides the sonic backdrop for "Get Up," on which Sierra recounts an evening with a few girlfriends, fresh off the plane from Cartagena, sweating *papis* at the Latin Quarter. With a rap from Ruff Ryders rhyme slinger Cross, the song takes you there and leaves you wanting more. "Thank You Mi Amor" is a mournful groove featuring Terror Squad's Cuban Link, while "Damele" juxtaposes the ancient sound of a Colombian *gaita* pipe with state-of-the-art drum production. Sierra's achievement is that she manages to bring these two worlds into balance.

Dimitri Ehrlich

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## revolutions

### PATTI LABELLE WHEN A WOMAN LOVES MCA 0000

Diane Warren wrote all but two of the songs on this album, and listening to it is like eating 12 slices of gooey chocolate butter cake—one can only digest so much lost trust, dashed hope, and soaring recovery in 45 minutes. Warren specializes in hooks and schmaltz, delivering a killer dose of both here. But Patti LaBelle, who could sing VCR manual instructions and make you cry, doesn't need songs that bang you over the dome with clues about when you're supposed to feel sad. Her voice frolics among the octaves like an Olympic gymnast, providing all the emotional acrobatics anyone needs. At fifty-something, LaBelle has protected her vocal chords far better than Tina Turner,



Mavis Staples, or Aretha Franklin, and the vaunted power of this lioness is still mighty to behold.

The appeal of LaBelle's singing has always been its shocking capacity to outdo everything that has come before it. But even though subtlety has never been her strong suit, LaBelle takes her hogdogging to a whole 'nother level on *When a Woman Loves*. This isn't just about being a show-off—it's like watching Bruce Lee beat up some old drunk. Okay, Patti, you win! *Dimitri Ehrlich*

**Heads in Detroit** get their daily dose of hits from the lovely **Sunny Anderson**, also known as 105.9 WDTJ's Daytime Diva. With a personality as bright as her name and a sharp sense of humor, Anderson, 25, has earned a fiercely loyal following. Here's a sample of what she's fanatic about.

**AFTER-WORK FAVES:** Jay-Z's *Vol. 3...Life and Times of S. Carter*: "If you really listen to his CD over and over, there are so many more meanings to the songs than you realize. I just love his rhymes." Li' Kim, *The Notorious KIM*: "Aside from Lauryn Hill, Li' Kim can't be touched for her rhyming. Not only did she put out a good CD, but when you see



Sunny Anderson

her in concert she delivers. Li' Kim knows what she's doing."  
**MOST REQUESTED TRACKS DURING HER ALL-REQUEST LUNCH HOUR:** Ludacris, "What's Your Fantasy" and R. Kelly, "I Wish."  
**COOLEST INTERVIEW:** "Afeni Shakur, hands down. I don't have the words to describe how important it was to talk to her and share it with others. One guy called and said that two minutes into the interview he had to pull [his car] over because the conversation was so interesting. I'll never forget it."  
**GUILTY PLEASURE:** "Phil Collins's live album, *Serious Hits... Live!*, is a feel-good CD. I know it sounds corny, but the songs are so good. Sometimes I have my CD player on random and all of a sudden "Susudio" comes on—that's so embarrassing!"

# SPIN CITY

BY JAZMIN PEREZ

**RICHARD PRYOR**  
RICHARD PRYOR...AND IT'S  
DEEP TOO!



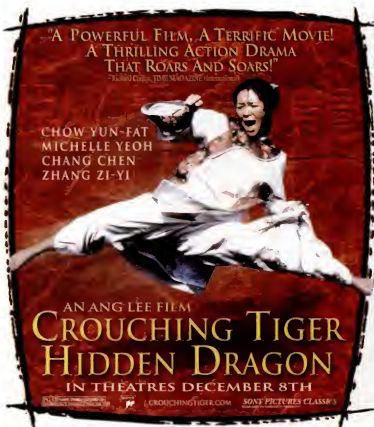
Richard Pryor is simply the most detonative force in American comedy of the last 25 years. Surely there's not a relevant comic out there who wasn't in some way influenced by his crude, multilayered, often absurd humor—or at least influenced by someone who was. Indeed, Pryor's effect, like that of all who profoundly change the world, is so far-reaching as to be almost undetectable.

Some of you were still in diapers when he released his obscenely titled hit *That Nigger's Crazy* and *Bicentennial Nigger* or the soundtracks of his breakout stand-up documentaries, *Live in Concert* and *Live on the Sunset Strip*. For you, Richard Pryor...*And It's Deep Too!*—Rhino's massive nine-CD boxed



set—may seem like brute-force archeology: Its liner notes by noir-velvet Walter Moseley and its commentaries from Eddie Murphy, Bill Cosby, Chris Rock, Whoopi Goldberg, Damon Wayans, Lily Tomlin, Robin Williams, and others only begin to show how deep Pryor's rich black seam runs.

Harry Allen



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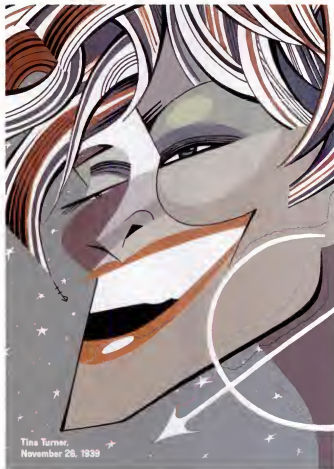
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# SIGNS O' THE TIMES

VIBE ASTROLOGY BY THELMA BALFOUR



## SAGITTARIUS

November 22–December 31

**NEXT SIX MONTHS:** Pluto's continued cycle in your sign means you're open to some changes. Yes, you can still party, but you have a tendency to act impulsively and recklessly. Communicating with and listening to others are key to understanding who you are. Once you master those skills, you can determine how to get what you want out of life. But taking one step at a time instead of those giant leaps is the smartest move right now. In December, enjoy the holidays and don't make promises you can't keep.

**FAMOUS SAGITTARIANS:** Tyra Banks, Ossie Davis, DMX, Robin Givens, Barry Gordy, Jimi Hendrix, Jay-Z, Montell Jordan, Kurupt, Mekhi Phifer, Brad Pitt, Richard Pryor, Little Richard, Treach, Gianni Versace, Dionne Warwick

### CAPRICORN Dec. 22–Jan. 19

With all of your running around and advice giving, you could use a break this month. You might be right 99.9 percent of the time, but it isn't up to you to fix everyone else's life! During the solar eclipse on Christmas Day, take stock and make some changes.

### AQUARIUS Jan. 20–Feb. 18

You're the center of attention at holiday parties. But as the festivities go into overdrive, you may need to disappear and rejuvenate. During the full moon on the 11th, you're in love! Your partner has to beg for mercy in all areas. When faced with far-reaching decisions, trust your abilities and instincts.

### PISCES Feb. 19–March 20

When it comes to work relationships, keep an open mind. Your busy schedule has you burning the candles at both ends this month. Don't retreat during the holidays; this may be the perfect opportunity to mend fences and forge rewarding relationships.

### ARIES March 21–April 19

Don't plunge into any financial or family situation you're unsure about. Your impulsive nature and need to cheerlead the pack won't work this time. Listen to others for a change. A conservative approach to holiday spending is good, but as far as the partying goes? That's another story.

### TAURUS April 20–May 20

Yes, 'tis the season to be jolly. Be careful during the full moon on the 11th; you might pounce on anybody within a 20-foot radius. Using good judgment in matters of the heart will take you a long way. This season, don't drain your bank account.

### GEMINI May 21–June 20

Pluto's cycle in opposition to your own means it's time to let go of any problems that have kept you down. Your real potential is waiting to be

explored. A vacation might be in order during the holidays. You could use a break from your busy schedule. Buy holiday gifts early.

### CANCER June 21–July 22

You tend to internalize any wrong done to you. But sulking in silence won't work this month. Allow logic to control your emotions during the Christmas Day eclipse. The opportunity to forgive and forget is here; now seize the moment. Avoid sweets during the holidays.

### LEO July 23–Aug. 22

Get organized this month. With all of the holiday parties and family events, your calendar is bulging. But even a feisty Leo can get worn down. When boredom sets in, grab your honey for some fun. During the eclipse on the 25th, a little soul-searching wouldn't hurt.

### VIRGO Aug. 23–Sept. 22

Your focus should be the holiday season, even though the full moon on the 11th may have you thinking about a career move. The hustle and bustle of your life demands a break. Once the partying is over, your mate will be waiting in the wings. Who knows? There may be a wedding on the horizon.

### LIBRA Sept. 23–Oct. 22

A little exercise and soul-searching are good now. During the eclipse on Christmas Day, affirm love. Family and loved ones are important. Arguments and holding grudges won't fly. All of that energy should be directed toward your honey.

### SCORPIO Oct. 23–Nov. 21

Busting loose seems unlikely for the secretive Scorpio—except in the bedroom. But as the year draws to a close, your handiwork will pay off. When it comes to business, make sure your ducks are in a row.

*Thelma Balfour is the author of Black Sun Signs and Black Love Signs.*

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### COVER STORY: "JAYHOVA'S WITNESS"

**COVER:** Black leather jacket with logo, black cotton crewneck logo sweatshirt, white cotton T-shirt, and black cotton ribbed T-shirt (worn as head wrap), all by **Recovacer**.

**PAGES 128-129:** Black denim jacket and jeans with red trim, and red cotton T-shirt, all by **Recovacer**.

**PAGE 134:** (From left) On **Beanie Sigel:** Indigo denim jacket and jeans and black knit skullcap, all by **Recovacer**. On **Jay-Z:** Red cotton crewneck T-shirt by **Recovacer**. On **Memphis Bleek:** Gray cotton crewneck T-shirt by **Recovacer**. On **Armi:** Pink sleeveless turtleneck and multicolored geometric-patterned pant, both by **Versace** available at Versace boutiques worldwide.

### GEAR: "GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES"

**PAGES 84-85:** (From left) Louis Vuitton Classic scooter \$2,500 by **Louis Vuitton** available at select Louis Vuitton stores; "GG"-printed canvas bar key chain \$65 by **Gucci** available at select Gucci stores; **Network Walkman S330** by **Sony** (for more information, please go to [www.sony.com](http://www.sony.com)); **Champagne Pommery 2000** wrap \$300 designed by **Thierry Mugler** (for more information, please call 914-25-WINE); Solitaire platinum fountain pen with sliding diamonds on clip \$17,400 by **Montblanc** available by special order exclusively at **Montblanc**, N.Y.C.; sterling silver disc cuff links with peridot stones \$210 by **Robin Rotzler** (for more information, please go to [www.rosinford.com](http://www.rosinford.com)); **Ralph Lauren Romance** for women \$150 by **Ralph Lauren** available at department stores nationwide;

holiday greeting cards (\$25 for 10) by **Johnny Nunez** available at **House of Nuban**, N.Y.C. (for more information, please go to [www.ubn.net](http://www.ubn.net)); gold mesh watch by **Gucci Timepieces**; gold nameplate bamboo hoop earrings \$195 by **Girishop.com** available exclusively at [www.girishop.com](http://www.girishop.com); diamond stud earrings \$5,999 by **Service Merchandise** (for more information, please call 800-JEWELRY or go to [www.servicemerchandise.com](http://www.servicemerchandise.com)); Winter candle \$20 by **Banana Republic** available at **Banana Republic** stores nationwide (for more information, please call 888-BRSTYLE).

### VIBEFASHION: "DESIGN O' THE TIMES"

**PAGE 176:** Purple and black wool sweater by **Iceberg** available at **Iceberg**, N.Y.C., sunglasses by **Qeel**.

**PAGE 177:** (From left) Camel silk square-print shirt \$780, green tweed pant \$410, chocolate silk square-print scarf \$230, and brown leather moccasins \$420, all by **Tom Ford** for **Gucci** available at select Gucci stores (for more information, please call 800-234-8224), gold watch by **Rolex**: tan and white milk herringbone coat \$16,900, pink and gold **Luxor** printed dress \$1,360, bandanna \$135, and beige ostrich flap bag \$1,295, all by **Tom Ford** for **Gucci** available at select Gucci stores (for more information, please call 800-234-8224), beige python shoe with turquoise piping \$475 by **Versace** available at **Versace** boutiques worldwide; brown and white silk French-cuffed shirt \$600, gray wool V-neck vest with silk front printed panel \$610, black and white wool herringbone pant \$410, and brown leather boots \$495, all by **Tom Ford** for **Gucci** available at select Gucci stores (for more information, please call 800-234-8224).

**PAGE 178:** Heather gray wool turtleneck sweater with black pattern \$248 and black wool pant, both by **Emporio Armani** available at **Emporio Armani**, N.Y.C. (for more information, please call 877-EMPORIO), black patent-leather boots by **Fendi**; gray horizontal-stripe sleeveless dress by **Moschino Couture** available at **Moschino**, N.Y.C.; gray wool pinstriped shoes \$500 by **Gianfranco Ferré** available at **Gianfranco Ferré**, N.Y.C. and **Beverly Hills** (for more information, please go to [www.gianfrancoferré.com](http://www.gianfrancoferré.com)); silver bracelet by **DKNY**; black leather and gray tweed sleeveless dress \$1,950 and black leather-knee-length boots with red mesh \$630, both by **Bottega Veneta** available at **Jeffrey**, N.Y.C. and **Bottega Veneta** boutiques nationwide (for more information, please call 877-362-1715).

**PAGE 179:** Red and pink mink patchwork fur coat \$32,441 by **Dolce & Gabbana** available at **Dolce & Gabbana**, N.Y.C., **Beverly Hills**, and **Houston**, red pinstriped cotton blouse \$170, pink and red corduroy striped capri pant (part of a suit \$770) and brown patent-leather shoes, all by **D&G Dolce & Gabbana** available at **D&G Dolce & Gabbana**, N.Y.C. and **Los Angeles**, gold earrings and choker, both by **DKNY**; pink satiny corduroy jacket \$610, pant \$280, and pink pique cotton shirt \$220, all by **D&G Dolce & Gabbana** available at **D&G Dolce & Gabbana**, N.Y.C. and **Los Angeles**, sunglasses by **Diesel**.

**PAGE 180:** Green and aqua silk square-patterned cotrdress \$4,200 by **Versace** available at **Versace** boutiques worldwide, red, brown, and black fur bag by **Fendi** available at **Fendi**, N.Y.C. (for more information, please call 800-FENDI-NY).

**PAGE 181:** Black wool vest with brown, rust, and cream silk printed front panel \$510, charcoal oxford tweed pant \$410, and brown silk scarf with beige square pattern (worn around wrist) \$230, all by **Tom Ford** for **Gucci** (for more information, please call 800-234-8224), brown leather shoes by **Sergio Rossi**; orange and beige leather dress and orange, red, and gold bag, both by **Fendi** available at **Fendi**, N.Y.C. (for more information, please call 800-FENDI-NY), two-toned leather slingbacks \$375 by **Tom Ford** for **Gucci** (for more information, please call 800-234-8224).

**PAGE 182:** Tan and black wool striped vest \$250, pant \$305, hat \$100, and scarf \$120, all



# VIBE CLASSIFIED

## THE DETAILS

by **Alessandro Dell'Acqua** available at Barnesys New York, N.Y.C., brown leather loafer by **Cole Haan**; beige and black wool hand-tooth jacket **S885** and skirt **S335**, both by **Alessandro Dell'Acqua** available at Barnesys New York, N.Y.C., ring by **John Hardy Collection**, sandals by **Sergio Rossi**.

**PAGE 183:** (Clockwise) Teal, burgundy, and silver Lurex striped top **S1265** and skirt **S430** with paisley detail, both by **Ultra Ozbek** available at Traffic, Los Angeles and select Barnesys New York department stores, sunglasses by **Gucci**; bordeaux and beige wool striped sweater striped **S300** by **Byblos** by **John Bartlett** available at Saks Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C., plum corduroy butterfly-print pant with diamanté detail **S480** by **D&G Dolce & Gabbana** available at D&G Dolce & Gabbana, N.Y.C. and Los Angeles; multicolored silk striped blouse **S730** and brown wool and silk tweed pant **S1185**, both by **Missoni** available at Missoni, N.Y.C., pink rhinestone sunglasses by **Versace**; red and black silk optical-print shirt **S825** and black and white printed jeans with rhinestone appliqué **S1200**, both by **Roberto Cavalli** available at Roberto Cavalli, N.Y.C. and Jeffrey, N.Y.C. and Atlanta (for more information, please go to [www.robertocavalli.net](http://www.robertocavalli.net)), sunglasses by **Romeo Gigli**; green and pink silk turnduck blouse and burgundy velvet pant, both by **Iceberg** available at Iceberg, N.Y.C., silver bracelet by **DKNY**.

### VIBESTYLIST: "DEEP COVER"

**PAGE 184:** (From left) On: Pale, black microfiber bra by **Baby Phat** available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal and Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C., thong with dangling crystals by **Baby Phat** available by special order at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal, diamond ring with round center stone by **Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels** available at Fred Leighton, N.Y.C. On Natané: Black triangle mesh bra and thong with Swarovski crystal detail, both by **Baby Phat** available by special order at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal, diamond hoop earrings and heart-shaped diamond on platinum chain, both by **Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels** available at Fred Leighton, N.Y.C.

**PAGE 185:** Leopard-print bra **S27** by **Baby Phat** available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal and Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C., denim short with gold draping chains by **Baby Phat** available by special order at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal, gold hoop earrings and choker, both by **DKNY**, gold bracelets by **Bijoux Givency**.

**PAGE 186:** Black lace bra **S29** and panty with white lace trim **S16**, both by **Baby Phat** available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal and Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C., brown full-length faux-fur coat by **Baby Phat Faux Fur Collection**, diamond pendant earrings and diamond necklace with yellow teardrop diamond, both by **Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels** available at Fred Leighton, N.Y.C.

**PAGE 187:** Pink cotton logo T-shirt, black and white animal-print lace bra **S27** and panty **S16**, all by **Baby Phat** available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C. and Montreal and Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C., diamond hoop earrings and diamond ring with round center stone, both by **Fred Leighton Rare Collectible Jewels** available at Fred Leighton, N.Y.C., crystal bracelets by **Swarovski**.

### VIBESTYLE: "SECOND TIME AROUND"

**PAGES 188-189:** On Noraage: Red cotton hooded zip-front sweatshirt **S72** and blue denim jeans **S70**, both by **Mecca USA** (for more information, please go to [www.meccausa.com](http://www.meccausa.com)), white cotton logo T-shirt by **NAG Jeans**, On Capos: Gray cotton T-shirt by **NAG Jeans**, blue denim jeans **S70** by **Mecca USA** (for more information, please go to [www.meccausa.com](http://www.meccausa.com)).

**PAGES 189-191:** On DJ Clue: Red nylon football jersey by **Puma**, black denim jeans **S74** by **Mecca USA** (for more information, please go to [www.meccausa.com](http://www.meccausa.com)), On Sader: X Dark red cotton sweater with gray logo **S78** by **Enyce**, blue carpenter jeans by **Pelle Pelle**, sneakers by **Nike**.

### VIBEFACE: "NEW AND IMPROVED"

**PAGE 192:** Black strapless dress **S304** by **Plain Sud** available at Plain Sud, N.Y.C., shoes by **Tuff Duck**, gold necklace and ring, both by **Mondras**.

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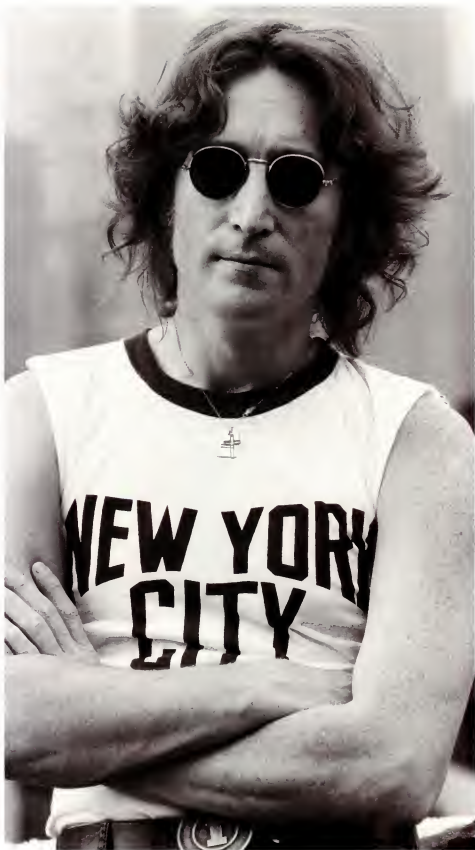
Shortly after Amadou Diallo was fatally shot by N.Y.C. policemen, numerous flower displays were left in the West African's honor at Central Park's Strawberry Fields memorial for John Lennon—linking two immigrants killed by gunfire as they tried to enter their homes.

It's as a New Yorker that I remember Lennon, mostly—not a Beatle, a peace activist, or a celebrity martyr. He was a guy you'd see around town or hear drop by a local overnight radio show to rave about rockabilly or reggae. The night Lennon was gunned down by a mentally disturbed fan 20 years ago, on December 8, 1980, the 11 o'clock news spread the word not yet a half hour old. It was, I believe, the first time I'd burst into tears as an adult.

The subsequent Lennon industry of biographies and sanctifiers—led by surviving Fab Three and Licensing Widow—has crafted a reductionist Lennon that's merely contradictory rather than capture the self-aware complexity of an artist who tried to articulate and transcend his flaws as he indulged in them. Lennon was an art student and a protopunk in his youth, cleaned up and prepackaged with his bandmates for their first recordings. When the Beatles made their public move into psychedelics and mysticism in the '60s, it was Lennon who aggressively pushed the farthest. He remarried to a nonwhite performance artist, infuriating many fans who'd later blame Yoko Ono for the band's breakup. Lennon and Ono later held an eight-day international press conference to protest the Vietnam War—as they stayed, absurdly, in bed.

Even as it fell out of fashion, the performance activism of the '60s carried Lennon through the '70s. His protracted fight for citizenship with the Immigration and Naturalization Service—politically motivated by the Nixon White House as payback for his antiwar activities—was quixotic yet miraculously successful. One of the federal judges who barred Lennon's deportation in 1975 called his four-year legal battle "testimony to his faith in this American dream." Today, it's a dream that still lingers, tenuously, over this land of the free, Strawberry Fields forever.

Robert Morales



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TOGETHER WITH CAVALIER YOU CAN HELP TURN THE CORNER ON BREAST CANCER.



Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death of women ages 20-39. By teaming up with ConceptCure, Chevy Cavalier is getting that fact out to young women all over the country. To see more of this exclusive vehicle, visit [www.conceptcure.com](http://www.conceptcure.com)—you'll learn all about this exciting program...upcoming events...and get important health information. And, you can make a pledge. One hundred percent of your donation goes toward breast cancer research, detection and treatment. General Motors has been committed to the fight for more than 20 years—having contributed \$412 million to cancer causes. Now's your chance to get involved.

For more information call 1-888-GM-CURE  
or log on to [www.conceptcure.com](http://www.conceptcure.com)



CAVALIER



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One in a series of 20 portraits celebrating ABSOLUT VODKA's 20th anniversary

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